


ZANEE KOORAN

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FREDERICK O. SIBLEY.

ZANEE KOORAN

A ROMANCE OF INDIA IN THE TIME
OF THE GREAT SEPOY REBELLION

BY
FREDERICK O. SIBLEY



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TO
THE PARENTS WHO BORE ME,
AND
UNDER WHOSE LOVING CARE I STILL ABIDE,
THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

IN presenting to the public the volume now in hand, the author begs it to be borne in mind that the English Sepoy Service in India, at the time of the Great Rebellion, was just a century old. Though as early as in the year 1746 native troops were trained to European tactics, by the French, at the siege of Cudalore, it was not until the "Black Hole" tragedy of June 20th, at Calcutta, had been avenged, and peace was again restored, that the first battalion of Bengal Sepoys was raised by the British.

It is true that England to-day governs India with Hindu soldiers, who fight bravely beside the Briton, laying down their lives, when necessary, to augment the power or to uphold the dignity, as the case may be, of the flag under which they have enlisted. It is also true that they have done so, for the most part, ever since the Sepoy system has been formed, enlarged and perfected by officers, who have led these armies from triumph to triumph, until now the British flag floats victoriously over the strongholds of the most powerful native princes.

But, in the beginning, a very grave mistake was made by the Anglo-Indian Government, nevertheless, in not recognizing all the privileges of that

curse of India, caste. Rather than granting an equality of wages and perquisites, as should have been done, to each native officer and private of the same grade in the army, the Brahmin Sepoys, for example, because they belonged to a class that claims superiority, and with whom the military profession is second in honor only to that of a priest, were allowed higher pay, and indeed many more comforts and immunities than farmers or mechanics. Truth to tell, they were given frequent furloughs on high days and festivals, while the fear of interfering with their religion, even led to concessions and indulgences that came to be regarded by them as matters of right, to the serious obstruction of military duty, and alas! the too lax enforcement of proper discipline.

For, instead of being taught that prominence and promotion are due to superior ability and soldiery qualities, they were often allowed to claim them by mere seniority and the absurd distinction of caste. Hence, they not only retained the power of dictation in their own hands, as you may say, but escaped many of the hardships of the service, greatly to the disgust and chagrin of those of lower caste, whose duties were thereby multiplied as well as made more arduous.

Furthermore, the action taken in regard to the titular dignity of the royal house of Delhi, was undoubtedly another paramount cause of the mutiny. Lord Dalhousie, having been authorized by the Court of Directors, on the death of the heir-apparent in 1849, to "terminate the dynasty of Timour, whenever the reigning king should die," had, to alleviate, as he hoped, the unpleasantness of

this, ventured on a compromise agreeing to recognize the king's grandson as heir-apparent, provided the family would quit the fortress of Delhi for the royal palace of Kootub.

As it unfortunately happened, this was very humiliating to the royal household; and, though they were powerless to do other than obey, the "insult" was brooded over for many a day by the Delhi Mohammedans. Therefore, these were ready, at the first outbreak, to avenge their grievance by joining the malcontents, thus making of Delhi a hotbed for the whole rebellion.

Among other causes of the mutiny, was the vague impression cherished alike by Hindus and Mohammedans, that ultimately the system of caste would be abolished, and a foreign policy forced upon all the races of the empire. Also, the very natural aversion entertained by them to being ruled over by a race of foreigners, for whom they had no special liking anyway, and of whom, as a matter of fact, they had heard not even a word until within a few hundred years.

Accordingly, was it any wonder that on these several points, the races of India were sufficiently of one mind to be mutual helpers when the day of trouble came—aye! to join shoulder to shoulder in a mighty effort to drive the hated Feringhees (Europeans) from the whole peninsula? No, and on account of their vast numbers, and the greatness of the territory occupied by them, neither was it any marvel that the sternest of stern measures were required to be carried out with the utmost possible dispatch, in quelling the Great Rebellion.

INTRODUCTION.

THE high road of fiction has been so often trodden by lovers of literature, that one could with difficulty convince them of the existence of several little by-paths of originality which they had constantly overlooked, but which when followed lead to broad avenues of vision.

This charming volume is filled with characters and situations that are new, exciting and instructive.

Men and women, who by their brave deeds have made the history of the world, stand out boldly in these pages as the glory of their achievements, their steadfastness of purpose and courage are told in telling sentences by this talented writer. The soul-inspiring deeds of valor performed by the hero and his friends, cannot but kindle the fiercest patriotism in every breast.

The heroine is so beautiful, true, strong and womanly, that she unconsciously enters the heart of the reader who follows her, almost breathless, through numberless dramatic episodes. It would be difficult to find in the whole realm of history or romance more realistic and exciting descriptions of the horrors and din of battle.

The several conflicts which take place in this story are depicted with such skill that even the most phlegmatic must be strongly moved.

The luxurious homes and delightful manner of living in the Orient add much to the charm of this work. The customs and habits of the natives as well as their characteristics could only be described by one thoroughly conversant with them and their ways.

This charming story will not fail to enlighten many on a subject practically unknown, and too much laudation cannot be bestowed upon the talented author, who has given the world this remarkable work.

JOSEPH TYLER BUTTS.

ZANEE KOORAN.

CHAPTER I.

A DILEMMA.

I WAS twenty-nine years old when I received my commission of captain in the East Indian service. Up to that time I had never dreamed of leaving my native land to rough it among the pagans. Pleasant, jubilant even had been my life, though practically moral, reasonably temperate, in the barracks at Chatham for seven years. Yes, for seven years I had messed and drilled with old acquaintances and new, and for seven more might have remained content with being a subaltern, and so on for aught I knew till the end of my days, had not that rupture occurred between father and me.

My father, alas, had been a proud man and a set one. He was exceedingly vain of our lineage. Our genealogical tree had been quite a prominent one, and the glory of that was his permanent joy. He had its whole history by heart; could tell you every incident from the time of Sir Guy

Clermonte, the founder of our house, to the present day.

This Guy Clermonte had been an esquire in the time of the Black Prince, who had knighted him on the field of Poitiers for deeds of noble daring, the accolade bestowing with his own hand; in connection with which he had given him a grand estate, and this greatly augmented in his later years for further acts of prowess and usefulness.

From that time—the middle of the fourteenth century—there had been, all told, seventeen knights at the head of our family, my father, Sir Edgerton, being the seventeenth.

Thanks to the ever increasing value of the property, when he came into possession of the title and estate, father found himself a very wealthy man. Not only did he own our fine ancestral residence in London, but there was Clermonte Hall, down in Hampshire, where I was born, with a whole township attached. And then, he had interests in several tin and copper mines out in Cornwall. Furthermore, my mother had been the daughter of a wealthy viscount—Mordaunt was the name—and by her demise, due to ushering me into the world, he had come into possession of still more wealth.

Accordingly he was one of the most opulent men of the day, and added to that, popular and influential. He had sat in Parliament, held many important civil offices—some of them foreign ones—and was known throughout the United Kingdom. I was his only child, his direct heir. Could I have expected anything else, therefore, than his

planning for me a marriage sooner or later, that would be in accordance with his taste, whether it was with mine or not?

Having never dreamed of such a thing, imagine my surprise when he called me into the library one morning during a run of mine up to our home on Belgrave Square and, with his gravest expression, said:

"Henry, my boy, why do you ignore the pressing invitation Lord Listerton has given you to visit him at his house at Windsor?"

"You are mistaken, father; I haven't ignored it," I replied. "I promptly penned him regrets that other affairs required my attention."

"Other affairs indeed!" he exclaimed. "Boy, have the kindness to look me in the eye," he said sternly, stopping suddenly before me.

Hard and cold sounded his voice as he said: "Now, listen: For years I have put up with your nonsensical military life. The greater part of the time you have been away from home—out of my life as much as if I had no son, and I've never complained. You appeared to love soldiering, which was by no means unnatural"—this opinion I supposed he based on Sir Guy's fame—"and I chose to let you have your way, firmly persuaded you would in good season come to your senses and form a union with some family that would be a credit to our name. But, on the contrary, you shun society more and more, always having the army—the army, from which you haven't derived an honor yet—for an excuse—curse it! Now you've l-i-t-e-r-a-l-l-y refused Lord Listerton's invitation—that, too, when the countess joined most

earnestly in the request. Why, boy, it's preposterous! Hang it! don't you know—don't you realize you can have the Lady Katharine for your wife, if you'll only manage rightly?"

"Yes," I answered, speaking mechanically. Had a chasm opened at my feet, I could hardly have been more surprised.

This was not because Lady Katharine was the eldest daughter of Lord Listerton, and he one of the foremost peers of the realm; it was rather due to her being what she was, or what I thought she was, in respect to age, disposition and the like, notwithstanding fine clothes, cosmetics and false hair.

You see, she had once beaten me so unmercifully when I was a boy for teasing her in her father's garden, that I had not forgotten how much larger and stronger she was than myself; above all, how her sharp, angular, beak-like face had blazed with fury, hatred and scorn. She had loomed up before me in horror's fancy like an Amazon, and as I then saw her, remained as fresh as ever in my mind. Hence father could not have mentioned a name to me more odious for matrimony.

"Remember," father continued, "she is the daughter of an earl, and possesses a large fortune in her own right; a fortune to which her father will make a grand addition when she shall marry to please him. You know, Henry, it's time for you to settle down. If you will offer your hand to Lady Katharine, and agree to resign from the army, I will makê you on your wedding day a present of Clermonte Hall, with all its surroundings. What! do you shake your head?"

"Dearest father," said I, not without emotion, for it pained me to disappoint him, "I have never fancied Lady Katharine, and never can; and—well, I doubt if she cares for me very much. No, were she the last woman on earth, I couldn't love her; and—surely, you wouldn't ask me to marry a woman I could not love, would you?"

He looked at me with lowered brow, and eyes in which an angry light began to glitter. Never have I forgotten him as he stood there before me. Clad in a spotless garb, of finest texture and quality, and of a cut becoming his threescore years and station, the only article of jewelry conspicuous on his person, barring in his shirt-front the large diamond he always wore, was a beautifully embellished badge, upon his left breast, of the Knight Grand Cross of the Bath; which valuable jewel he was fingering nervously, a custom of his when deeply thinking or angry.

Then—

"Whom could you love?" he sneered.

"Really, father, I am at a loss to tell. Perhaps Amy, Major Brown's daughter, comes as near to awakening the divine fire within me as any one I know. Still, even with her there seems to be something lacking—something failing to develop the foundation required for making a true and devoted husband, according to Shakespeare and other great poets."

"Shakespeare, divine fire and all your other bosh be hanged! What! Do you think I'd tolerate your marrying the child of low-born parents—of parents without rank, or station, or wealth?"

"To whom, sir, do you refer?" I asked with dignity.

"Why, to Officer Brown."

"Sir, Major Brown is a man of rank—of high rank. He was an officer of the line in the Crimea, where at the Alma he covered himself with glory, and won the personal praise of the Queen."

"Pooh! that's nothing," he said scornfully. "Haven't I a gamekeeper down in Hampshire who was also an officer in the war?"

"You have," I answered.

Peace there was not to be, however, for forthwith he said:

"Once and for all I ask you, will you withdraw from the army and marry Lord Listerton's daughter?"

"No, sir, I will not," I replied, firmly.

"Don't you ever intend to marry?" he inquired at length, his face threatening as a thunder-cloud.

"Well, that depends; possibly, but it will have to be some one whom I love, and who cares something, I think, for me."

"Dolt! Idiot! Can't you harp on anything but love?"

"But think, father," I ventured to expostulate; "think of what mother was when you first saw and loved her; think——"

"Boy, have you lost your reason?" he broke in, white with passion. "Well, then, know that I haven't called you in here this morning to talk of your mother. It is for your own welfare I am now concerned. Again I ask you, will you marry Lady Katharine and leave the army?"

"No, sir; I won't!"

"What's that?"

"I say I won't."

For a minute he stood still and looked at me as if he would go through me; so much so, he made me tremble, while, at the same time, my heart throbbed painfully, for I loved my father, and would willingly have done anything reasonable to please him. But to marry Lord Listerton's daughter—Heavens! he could not have realized what he was asking of me.

"Well," he said finally, and he spoke slowly and sternly, half to himself and half to me, "we may as well come to an understanding now as later. Mild measures fail to have any influence over you; therefore, heroic ones must be resorted to. I now command you, Henry, to withdraw from the army and marry Lord Listerton's daughter."

"Command me?"

"Yes, command you."

"And what if I still refuse?"

"Then—then I will renounce you—disinherit you—cut you off to a sovereign; I will, so help me God!"

"Why, father, you must be the one whose reason has departed," I gasped. "What! Would you want all your wealth to pass out of the family name, and leave me—me, your only son, your sole heir, by right—as poor as a church mouse?"

"No, I would not," he said bitterly; "but I'd rather that that—that, understand—should happen, than to have our name disgraced, as I fear—as I am confident now you will sooner or later do by uniting yourself to some *low-born* beggar."

"But might I not do that just the same if disinherited?" I asked.

"No, not in the name of Clermonte," he replied.

"Why, how is that? What do you mean?" I demanded, mystified and not a little alarmed now by the unmistakable confidence in his tone.

"I mean, Henry, just what I say."

"And that is——"

"If you persist in throwing over Lady Katharine, I will not only disinherit you, but drive you from under my roof; further, forbid you ever the use of my name again. (Of course, you may have the presumption to use it; but if you do, remember this: it will be against my wishes, and—with my spiritual curse.) The name of Clermonte, I tell you, shall maintain its dignity or disappear. No, not if I can help it shall any of my ancestors be given cause to turn over in their graves and censure me for not having done my duty to them in this respect. On that I am resolved."

I saw he was. Indeed, had I had a doubt otherwise, the steel-like ring in his voice, the sight of his lips compressed like a vise, his whole mien frigid and appalling as a glacier, would have instantly dispelled it. I therefore knew that his decision in respect to my marrying the Lady Katharine was no hasty one with him, but arrived at after much thought and deliberation. It was an ultimatum, so to speak, and on that account it angered me. Hence, what I said to him I don't remember, nor do I want to. The most I can say is, I have a dim recollection of his leading me from the library, and so to the front door, bidding me leave his presence, and not to seek it again until

I had made up my mind to leave the army and marry Lord Listerton's daughter.

As a matter of fact, I scarcely realized what had happened until I was out of the house and in the street.

Then it occurred to me that my situation was serious. Father was a man of his word. Pride, it was true, had led him astray; but not for that would he relent.

I went that afternoon to the banker who held in charge the greater proportion of the stocks and other property belonging to our family, and who had held my own inheritance from mother ever since I had come into possession of it. The banker, a kind and accommodating old man, received me with marked deference.

"Mr. Whently," said I, "I'm about starting out in life on my own account, and must have my funds in such shape as will enable me to draw upon them at will."

"Why, bless me, my dear Henry, you can do that now. What more can you have? I trust you won't take your business from me. I'm doing well with your money; I hope to do still better. Anyhow, I promise you I will do the very best I can."

"I don't doubt it," I said, with a reassuring smile. "But what I want to know now is, How do I stand? I can't for the life of me call to mind when I have drawn upon you."

"Upon your main fund, my dear Henry, you have never drawn; and I have, besides, quite a handsome balance on hand in your favor from the

deposit of your quarterly allowance—that which your father has deposited for you, you know?”

“But I don’t know,” I cried. “What! Do you mean to tell me that all the checks I have presented to you, and which you have cashed, have been paid without touching my mother’s money?”

“Certainly, sir; that’s it exactly. You see, ever since you enlisted—six years ago——”

“No, seven,” said I, smiling.

“Why, bless me! so it is. Your father ordered me, on the first of every quarter, commencing with the first day of October, to place to your credit a certain sum, this simplifying matters for him, and saving him all further bother. Well, from that time the amount specified by him has been placed to your credit regularly, and so little have you drawn upon it, I have about fourteen hundred pounds.”

My heart gave a great leap. I did remember, now Mr. Whently had spoken, that father had told me he was going to place a regular quarterly allowance in the hands of his banker for my use, and that I must make the sum suffice. “If you go beyond that, Henry,” he had said, “you will have to draw upon your own fund which you hold from your mother.”

A messenger boy entered with letters in his hand.

Mr. Whently took these and was upon the point of laying them down, unopened, when the superscription of the topmost missive caught his eye.

“Why, bless me! Here’s a letter from your father, Henry. What has he to say, I wonder?”

I made him no reply, but, with a sinking heart, I

made myself a guess. His countenance did change as he read the letter. He read it to the very end; then, after a moment's reflection, he arose, and, going to the door, which communicated with the outer office, turned the key.

Coming back to where I sat, he scratched his bald head with one hand and with the other gave me the letter, saying, as he did so:

"It is from your father, Henry, and I think you should see it. The fact is, I can't quite make it out."

The letter ran as follows:

"BELGRAVE SQUARE, September —, 1855.

"MR. JOHN WHENTLY:

"*Dear Sir*—You hold in possession authority from me for the payment of a certain sum, quarterly, to the credit of my son, Henry. That authority I hereby peremptorily suspend; pay no more money to that credit, until I give you notice to.

"Comply with the above, and you will greatly oblige,
Yours respectfully,

"EDGERTON CLERMONTÉ, K. G. C. B."

I handed the letter back, and looked the old banker squarely and frankly in the face.

"Well, Henry, can you explain it?" he asked.

"I can, Mr. Whently," I said, after a moment's reflection, "and what is more, I will. But before I begin I want to warn you that you may not care to remain my banker, although I have no wish to make a change."

"Why, my dear Henry, what does it all mean?

Ah—surely, you haven't had a falling out with your father?"

"I regret to say I have," I responded.

"Too bad—too bad!" he exclaimed, wringing his hands. "I thought you and he were on the best of terms. You always have been, haven't you?"

"Yes; but to-day he turned me out-of-doors— forbade me ever the shelter of his roof again, unless I comply with certain conditions of his."

"Turned you out-of-doors?"

"He did, Mr. Whently; he also threatened to disinherit me, even disown me."

"What! you, his only child, his sole heir. This is awful. But pardon me, my dear Henry; perhaps I should not thrust myself into your confidence."

"It's all in the explanation I owe you," I replied. "The only thing I have to ask of you is, to give me your promise not to divulge to any one else—to no living person—what I am going to tell you?"

"Certainly," he replied; "certainly, my dear Henry. But, for that matter, you need have had no fears. I wouldn't abuse your confidence for anything."

I related my quarrel with father. I included the whole of it, expecting thereby to impress him the better in my behalf; but when I had finished he, on the contrary, disappointed me by shaking his head gravely and looking very serious. Once he understood the affair, he regarded it in about the same light as father had, and accordingly advised me to make peace with him as soon as possible.

He tried to reason with me, and oh, his arguments were so good, so plausibly expressed, they burdened my mind for many a day, and nearly caused me to relent.

As soon as I could get the chance to say something, I asked him if he knew what the sum was which he held subject to my personal order. With a troubled expression he arose, went to the fire-proof vault close at hand, and brought out a heavy, calf-bound ledger. He turned to a certain page, and, after a brief reckoning, said:

"Sixteen years ago, coming the first of next November, your mother's gift to you was set apart in your name, in trust, and to be yours entirely upon your having attained the age of twenty-one. The sum, of course, has never been drawn upon; and as it was invested in the three-and-one-fourth-percents, I now find to your credit eleven thousand, four hundred and some odd pounds."

Thus, owing to the quarterly credits, which I had not counted on, in that I had forgotten them, I found there were nearly thirteen thousand pounds in the bank, subject to my order at any minute.

This I decided to leave where it was—at least for the present, Mr. Whently saying that if I did not break in upon the old investments, he could soon assure me an income therefrom of over four hundred pounds a year.

Ah, not a bad showing, after all; at any rate, it would be adequate for me to get along with fairly well, provided I kept my expenditures down as I had of late.

I was strolling, aimlessly, through Pall Mall

that afternoon, nervous, bewildered, and half-distracted, when a cool, steady hand suddenly grasped mine, another soothingly seized me by the shoulder, and a cheery, well-known voice called out:

“Hi, Henry! You renegade: what’s in the wind for you to avoid me like this?”

Turning round, I found myself face to face with the familiar form and beaming countenance of my dear friend and superior officer, Colonel Howard Richerson!

CHAPTER II.

OFF FOR THE EAST.

"WHY! what is the matter?" asked my friend, anxiously. "You look glum and downcast—crest-fallen as a frost-bitten plant in springtime. You left the quarters cheerful enough yesterday morning, didn't you?"

From Colonel Howard Richerson I had no secrets. Long had I been under his command, and a more genial, jovial, upright officer, or a truer-hearted and braver, I never knew. Though a strict disciplinarian, his whole regiment loved him, and I in particular. The fact was, he seemed to me like a brother, for when not on duty, much were we together, always comparing notes, generally to my profit, on every subject pertaining to our affairs, personal as well as military. Hence, the delight with which I now returned his salutation—the unspeakable relief it afforded me, as I said:

"The governor's gone back on me," meaning by that father.

"Great powers! Is that all?"

"Well, isn't it enough?" I asked.

"Oh, but by your appearance, your expression, Henry, I feared you'd got into some awful mess—

fallen in love, perhaps. Ha, ha, ha!—I did, though.”

“No, it isn’t anything in that line—not exactly,” I answered, smiling in spite of myself; “and yet——”

“Something pretty close to it, then?”

“Ye-es, in a way. The governor wants me to marry, and—well, I’m opposed to it. There! what’d you think?”

“Think? Why, that he’s chosen a very inopportune season for such a thing. Your services are at present demanded by the Government; will be for some time to come, it appears——”

“Oh, but he says that I must abandon military life; give it up entirely.”

“Great powers! He does?”

“Yes; and that isn’t all. The welfare, the very happiness of my future depends perhaps on the move I now make. Really, colonel, it is serious; never did I need some one more to advise me, or on whom I could lean for support.”

“Ha! Then I’ve run across you just in time, my dear Henry. Wants you to marry and resign from the army, eh? Well, that’s conducting matters with a high hand, I must say; it’s deucedly cool, in fact. But come into the club, and tell me all about it. I’ve something to communicate, also—something of vital importance to both of us, and which, I think, will conflict not a little with your father’s plans,” he concluded, with a chuckle.

Ensconced anon in a secluded nook, with wine and cigars between us, I began at the beginning and related to him the events of the day.

“Poor Lady Katharine! Think you she’s devoid

of feeling, heartless?" he asked in a woe-begone tone, but with a twinkle in his eye, nevertheless, when I had finished.

"No, I *know* she isn't; I discovered that when a boy," I replied. And thereupon I related my "adventure" with her in her father's garden. "Ugh!" I exclaimed in conclusion, "I'd rather be yoked to a she-devil, and have it done with, as marry her."

"Well, well, little danger of your having to," said he, laughing; "indeed, the regiment wouldn't tolerate it, and there isn't any likelihood that I shall. No, Henry, if your father is biased, and bent on your conforming to his plans, he can't run the army—at least not all of it; and Banker Whently's siding against you won't help him any. Great powers! To be dictated to as you have been, is not only outrageous, but an insult to me—me, myself, I say. Therefore, holding the trump card, as I do, which must ultimately fetch your father down a peg—overcome his perversity entirely perhaps—I am going to play it with less compunction, remember, than I otherwise should."

"Trump card? Why, what are you driving at, colonel? You don't claim to have in possession the power to frustrate father, do you?" I inquired, looking at him incredulously, but none the less eagerly.

"I am sure of it, Henry. Let me explain matters, and see if you won't think so, too." Pouring himself out a few spoonfuls of Rudisheimer, which rare old wine having quaffed, he leaned back in his chair, crossed his feet and said:

"You know there has been a good deal of talk

lately that Lord Dalhousie is coming home from India? Well, it's a settled thing now—that is, as soon as Viscount Canning can get there to relieve him. I received the intelligence last night, and with it, Henry, an appointment in the East Indian service."

"You did?" I exclaimed, jumping to my feet. "What! *You* going to India—to the East?"

"I am," he replied, looking at me with an amused smile. "Yes, Henry, I've been ordered out with Lord Canning, on detached duty; though, of course, I shall at some time come under a commander. But the best of it is, they have given you to me for my chief aid. That, I can tell you, pleases me." He helped himself to another cigar.

"Me?" I cried, more and more amazed; "*me?*"

"Yes, Henry; *you*," he said, laughing.

"Oh, but I say, colonel, isn't this rather sudden?" I asked, dropping back, or more correctly, collapsing into my seat. "How do they know I will go? Has the whole regiment been ordered out?"

"No, Henry; it's only a few—a select party, as you may say—that's been appointed to accompany Canning. The commission offered you is a captain's, and that, you know, in the regular service, is no small thing."

"But—how—to whom is the promotion due?" I asked, quite bewildered.

"Why, to your creditable conduct. Good men—men upright and true—are needed in India just now. According to latest advices, trouble is expected with the natives. Oh, nothing very serious, they say, is anticipated. But there is no telling

what may happen, for it is certain that Dalhousie has been strict; also, eager to gain territory and spread our arms. Whether that was wise or not, remains to be seen. Difficulties, therefore, are predicted. It is especially hinted that there will be trouble in Oude, which extensive country Dalhousie has just annexed. Its inhabitants are of an independent, warlike disposition, and there are more than fifteen millions of them. Think of it! Fifteen millions.

“Well, as I said before, brave, active men—men keen and intelligent, and with a liberal education”—(the last by way of compliment to my being a graduate of London University)—“are wanted to look after them; and as I must take a staff with me, it was decided to offer you this commission.”

As he spoke he drew a packet from an inner pocket and laid it on the table before me. I examined it. A broad, official looking affair it was, smelling strongly of sealing wax, and bound in red tape.

Tearing off the wrapper, I found it contained two documents for me, the larger of which, on fine vellum, and bearing the imposing seal of the War Office, was a commission of captain of artillery in Her Majesty's army; the other, a special order, assigning me to duty with the forces in India, and directing me to report forthwith to Colonel Howard Richerson. There was also a brief, complimentary note, expressive of hopes that this promotion would prove satisfactory to me; ah, as if such a thing could be anything else to a mere subaltern.

None the less was my joy tinged with bitterness. While it was true that a glorious avenue

had been opened up to me by which I could escape from father, thwarting him completely, it was one I hardly desired, in that it would lead me so hopelessly away from a settlement, an understanding with him.

"My dear colonel," said I, laying the documents down and proceeding now to light my second cigar, "this commission would be welcomed by me beyond expression, were it not for the governor. How am I going to leave England at variance with him?"

"That, Henry, is just what you should do. That is where you can assert yourself, and, what is more, show him that you do not fear him. Pardon my saying it, but you've already cuddled to your father so long, he thinks—yes, actually believes—you are lacking in experience, if not competence, to take care of yourself. Consequently, he must look after you and plan for you as if you were still a lad. It'll be a bitter blow to him—your going to India; but remember what I tell you, it will teach him a lesson: it will open his eyes to the fact that you are worthy of being his son, after all, and he will therefore come to respect and admire you.

"No, Henry, from my point of view nothing more fortunate could possibly have befallen you; and if you will only avail yourself of it, I'll go a step further by saying your father will yet be glad to make up with you on any terms; for if he didn't care for you—in truth, love you very dearly—would he have bothered to treat you as he has?"

"Indeed, I hadn't thought of that," I exclaimed, eyeing my friend with admiration. Therewith a great desire—a longing not to be put down—did

possess me to go to India with him—aye, to that land of magic, mystery, elephants, tigers, serpents, idolatry, marvelous temples and fabulous gems.

* * * * *

The day of departure had come—a clear, bright day of October, 1855.

All arrangements had been made and completed, and we were about setting sail for the East in a grand and noble ship—one of the finest and best appointed of the company's—which now lay on the calm bosom of the Medway at dear Old Chatham. Grand she did look, her canvas hanging loose from the yards, and her anchor apeak, requiring only a few turns of the capstan to trip it. Noble she certainly was, laden with her valuable cargo of military stores, and special gathering of humanity.

I suppose I should have been happy; but I was not. Though I wanted to go to India, it was with desperate reluctance that I was tearing myself away from home and kith and kin. The bustle and military fervor around me failed for once to awaken my enthusiasm.

Previous to coming aboard I sealed and mailed a letter to father. I made it as humble, mollifying and penitent as the adequacy of my poor style permitted. I explained in it every reason for the course I was adopting. It was with an effort, therefore, that I maintained my composure ere the colonel took me by the arm, led me forward and gave me a formal introduction to the strangers present, so that I was drawn not only into conversation with them, but also into the atmosphere of his animated, elevating thoughts.

But, then, that was just like the colonel. No one not intimately acquainted with him could understand what a fine fellow he was. Born to command, his very presence imparted to you a sense of security and peace; and—well, no father could have watched over his child better than he did over me. I was never neglected when under his charge. Better yet, he always seemed to have the power to read my mind, and the way he now strove to interest and cheer me up would certainly have won my gratitude, only long before this he had pumped the well dry.

A man somewhat past forty, he bore his years bravely. His wife, too—Lillian (Lill, he always called her)—was a tall, queenly, handsome woman, of about his own age, who, when she looked you in the face, with her hearty, generous smile, impressed you as being wholly good and true; and so she was—that is, as much as any mortal can very well be.

Meanwhile, a steam tugboat had come alongside for the purpose of taking the ship in tow, and further hilarity was cut short; those belonging ashore became very attentive to their friends, for now but a short time longer could be given them in which to be together.

Much was the nervousness manifested, therefore, and every one's face grew grave, some drawn as if with pain, even to the colonel's, while all talked fast and furious; there were so many things to say, items which up to this point had slumbered just beneath the surface.

All too soon was the ship's anchor brought to the bow; and while this was being done, the tug

made fast to her fore and main chains. Then, surging ahead, the little boat pulled and jerked at the huge mass till, finally, she was dragging her slowly but surely after her through the water toward the Thames.

And now, as if awakened to life by the ship's motion, people poured up from below, crowding the quarter-deck, where they remained in close and earnest conversation until we had passed Sheerness, and could look off upon the trackless waste of the German Ocean.

Then it was that the tug must leave us, and with it the moment that strained the heart and brought tears to the eyes, strive as we would to restrain our deep emotions. To sum up briefly, it was but a God's blessing, a fervent prayer for good, a fond, loving, hopeful farewell, and lo! we were parted.

Before we could believe it, the tug had cast off and was on its way back toward the place whence it had come, our friends on it waving to us their last adieus. For the sails of the ship having been set, we, too, were moving—moving majestically toward the Atlantic. Aye! Toward the land of the Ganges, where, could some of us have looked ahead and caught but a glimpse of the hardships and horrors which were to beset our paths, we would sooner have gone down to a watery grave at once than further have proceeded.

CHAPTER III.

BENARES, THE HOLY.

O BENARES! City of the pinnacles of a thousand pagodas. O threefold holy Kasi! O ancient Varanasi! How can words depict thy glory and splendor, thy marvelous temples, thy magnificent palaces, thy sparkling mosques, which dazzle the eye? It was dawn, bright and sunny dawn when first I saw thee, resting in thy amphitheatre by the side of Mother Ganges, the daughter of Vishnu. There where thou hast rested for more than five-and-twenty centuries; inviting me with thy gnats, thy stairs, three hundred feet and over in width, let down so proudly to the sacred stream, whose glistening waters were agitated by the wild gestures of countless bathers. Ah!—

*“And a cool, sweet splashing was ever heard,
As the molten glass of the wave was stirred,
And a murmur, thrilling the scented air,
Told where the Brahman bowed in prayer.”*

O, grand and glorious city! Say what others may of thee, always hast thou had a charm for

me. Narrow and crooked as thy streets are, and deplorable though it is to see the heathen in his blindness bow down to wood and stone, thy very name awakens my sweetest, rarest memories, and stirs anew the love in my heart, the fire in my soul, for her who is a part of 'Heaven itself, and to the pure heights of which she will some day soar, there to dwell forever!

But—more of her anon.

Suffice it to say now that Colonel Howard Richerson and I were installed in this sacred city of the Hindus, Benares, or more properly, in the English portion of it, Secrole, which lies about three miles further up the Ganges;—a city within itself, none the less; typical, too, of all our other European cities of the Indies, with avenues broad and extended, its luxurious bungalows surrounded by beautiful groves and gardens. What made it of special importance, however, it contained most of our civil establishments, and above all, the military cantonments.

As a matter of fact, it had been considerably over a year since that memorable embarkation on the Medway, at Chatham; which period, as I looked back upon it, seemed like a dismal dream more than anything real.

Not as our ocean voyage had been anywhere unpleasant or eventful out of the ordinary. It had, in truth, been void of incident until we arrived at Cape Town, further than that an enduring friendship had sprung up between the colonel and Lord Canning, whom I had often seen come to counsel and advise with my friend on questions of state and policy, and in the end never

seek to conceal the fact that he had felt to thank him for favors rendered—favors in the way of unravelling knotty military problems and throwing light on various dark subjects; no, nor the enjoyment he had derived therefrom.

While we were lying at anchor under Table Rock, however, a ship had put in at the Cape, a ship direct from Calcutta, and from an experienced officer who was on his way home in her we had received our first reliable note of alarm concerning the prognosticated trouble in India. He had waited upon the viscount in person, and among others, Colonel Richerson and I were both permitted to be present.

I will not attempt to repeat what he said; I will merely state that he informed us it was his opinion a storm was brewing in the upper land of the Ganges which our leading officials did not, or else would not see. In point of fact an insurrection there was inevitable. Could it be otherwise when during the last five years of Dalhousie's administration full fifteen millions of people had been robbed of their country, their broad and fruitful territory torn from them, and the yoke of a foreign potentate cast upon their necks? Indeed, hundreds, if not thousands, of petty princes—many of them kings in their own right—had been, by the simple stroke of an English pen, hurled from their thrones, their authority wrested from them, and their subjects called upon to bow to other rulers and other powers.

True, open rebellion had not yet occurred; but so widely had the seeds of discontent been sown, and left to germinate through the lack of proper

diplomacy, a feeling for retaliation and revenge was being fostered, which could not, now, be helped, and it was only a question of time when the worst would come to pass. That was what this officer from Calcutta thought. A rather pessimistic view of the situation, did we say? Well, it might be; he hoped it was, of course; but alas! if he believed it; no, he had seen too much to do that.

Nevertheless, attending our arrival at Calcutta, not a single report indicative of seditious ferment in the interior was to be heard. On the contrary, everything had appeared peaceful and bright, progressive and flourishing.

What did it mean?

We were at a loss to tell. We only knew that undesirable information, even concerning affairs of state, was, as it has always been, best obtained from outside sources. Possibly if we had returned to Cape Town, or repaired to some other important seaport, all our fears incident to what we had been told would have been increased by more news—news decidedly alarming; whereas, being now so near to the seat of the impending danger, that is, according to hearsay, nothing tending to confirm our least suspicions was to be discovered. Therefore, the evil was of a more serious nature than we supposed, or else that officer met by us at the Cape had been mistaken, and every rumor thus far current without foundation. Which was correct? We were inclined to think the latter.

Yes, like many others, alas! we did so; the new Governor-general himself not excepted. While in Calcutta I had posted a long letter to father, the

same as at Cape Town, St. Helena and Gibraltar, describing what had befallen me up to date, and reminding him in conclusion, as in each of my former epistles, that I thought he should not censure me too much for the course I was pursuing. Then, a few days later, I had set out with Colonel Richerson for Benares, he having been assigned there to assume temporary command.

Could Lord Canning have had his way, however, I would have remained with him. Thanks to the colonel, he had taken an interest in me during our ocean voyage, till he esteemed me highly; and his desire—earnestly expressed—had been for me to accept a place upon his official suite. I had politely as I could declined the offer, telling him that as I had originally come out as chief aide to the colonel, with whom I had so long been friends, it would pain each of us greatly to be separated now. Furthermore, if there was going to be trouble with the natives, and need of help to overcome it, I ardently wished to be at the front with him, where my services would count, if possible. Various officers of the suite had been equally earnest with their chief in endeavoring to win me over, but I was not to be persuaded from my purpose. Infinitely to my friend's delight, I accompanied him.

Our journey up country had been made partly by land and partly by water, and not only the colonel and myself, but every one else (there were a dozen of us in the party, exclusive of my friend's wife and two other ladies), had thoroughly enjoyed it.

Everything being new and strange to us, we had taken our time. There was so much to be seen,—the fertile plains, resplendent with fields of maize,

wheat, sugar-cane, indigo, flax, cotton and the like, alternated by others often perfectly sterile and barren; the lowlands overspread with vast mats of rice, and above all the jungles—those thick growths of underwood, tall grasses and climbing plants, abounding with tigers, elephants, boars, poisonous serpents and multitudes of monkeys, not to mention other animals and birds of various species. The ceaseless array of villages, also, scattered about, between the great cities, generally close to groves of sturdy trees, their temples always conspicuous above the thatched huts of mud; the swarthy inhabitants come upon, usually in the scantiest of attire, especially when working afield, the women there often wrapped up in dark-blue calico cloth only, and plying the hoe perchance as hard as the men; the queer modes of irrigation and remarkable crafts seen on the rivers; the fakirs, jugglers, *sapwallas* (snake-charmers), beggars, cripples, liars, thieves, thugs, and cut-throats of all description, ready to fleece one and take his life at every turn; the vine and moss-covered ruins of palaces, temples, and tombs, confronting us here and there, and testifying to the wealth and advanced civilization of former ages; and lastly, but not least, the verdant forests, which, when viewed from a distance, reminded us of trees at home, though never did that vegetable wonder, the banyan, with its many stems.

There were the funeral pyres, too, and particularly the "Towers of Silence," or Parsee burying-ground; these always surrounded by flocks of vultures—large, majestic-looking birds, notwithstanding their ungainliness and bare necks, and

which are in truth the only official undertakers of that strange, yet remarkably intelligent people. For it is the fact that when a corpse—nude—has been laid on the iron grating over the top of the tower, or towers (it requiring several of them grouped together to constitute a cemetery), and mankind, having performed his last obsequies over the dead, obsequies which no unbeliever is allowed to witness, and which are held sacred and kept secret even among the Parsees themselves, has withdrawn, down swoop those patient denizens of the air, the vultures, and begin their ghoulish task of feasting on the flesh, which is not abated until naught but the skeleton remains to bleach in the sunlight, and ultimately to drop, bone by bone, through the grating into the tower.

All this, I say, besides other manners and customs peculiar to the land, too numerous and too varied to mention, awaited our acquaintance and inspection.

Whenever the heat sorely tried us we had stopped by the way, usually at points where Europeans had erected their commodious bungalows, but sometimes at what is now known as "Dak-bungalows," a kind of hotel or public house constructed by the Government, at regular intervals, on the chief military roads. We had also been enabled several times to join in pleasant and stirring hunting expeditions, not the least exciting and, occasionally, most dangerous of which was pig-sticking. The distance from Calcutta to Benares, as we traveled, was therefore a little more than four hundred miles, and we had made an even month of it on the road.

Having at last arrived at our destination, we found the officers stationed here expecting us, and the commandant, for the time, Colonel Neill, who was to proceed to Calcutta as soon as relieved, had made no delay in turning over his command to Colonel Richerson, whereupon I had assumed the position as chief-of-staff, and entered at once upon the discharge of my duties—an office which I had found, I assure you, to be no sinecure.

Not but that the Sepoys were docile enough. As yet no sign of mutiny had been manifested by them. They were rather very agreeable fellows, being for the most part excellent specimens of manhood—handsome, tall, eagle-eyed and self-possessed, with a magnificent carriage and superb bearing. A really fine appearance they made when on parade, for then their uniforms—a sort of a compromise between the conventional British dress and the native costume—were wonderfully becoming to them, while the gorgeously colored turbans made a finishing touch.

At the time of which I write the force at Benares was composed of the Thirty-seventh Regiment of Native Infantry, very nearly one thousand strong; the Thirteenth Irregular Cavalry, numbering from four to five hundred privates—all natives, and a battalion of Sikhs, consisting of about four hundred men.

With the Thirty-seventh there were one hundred and twenty native commissioned officers; and one-half the commissioned and all the non-commissioned, of the cavalry and Sikh battalion, were natives. The rest of the officers—about forty in all—were Europeans, of whom not more

than two-thirds were at any time entirely well and strong, and properly attached to the station.

I mention all this, not so much to show you how arduous our tasks were, as to enlighten you concerning the true condition of affairs when the Great Rebellion did come; for the difference between the native force and the Englishmen at Benares was a good example of every station throughout India, in which the Sepoys came to figure so disgracefully, so abominably.

Hard as we had to work, however, there were attractions and amusements in plenty to make us happy, and which we found time to enjoy. Fêtes and parties were held weekly, supplemented by balls and entertainments; and when these grew monotonous—though they seldom did—there was this rare old city, with its wealth of wonders and antiquities, to fall back upon.

Furthermore, the bungalows where we Britons had our quarters, were located in the pleasantest part of Secrole. It was upon an eminence commanding not only a fine view of the native town—that portion occupied by the Sepoys—but also much of the surrounding country.

My bungalow—a simple but very pretty affair, built entirely upon the ground floor, in rustic style, and having a wide veranda running round it, with tatties, or blinds, made of reeds or strips of wood to let down, and give shade and coolness to the rooms within—was just outside the parade-ground, at a point overlooking the river, on a lovely avenue, lined with trees stately and luxuriant as any to be found in the parks of London. That is, the maiden, or, as in England it would be called,

"the common," on which the troops were drilled and exercised, was between this elevation of land and the barracks, which were further down the river; in fact, in the lower part of the town, next to Benares proper.

As you are probably aware, the veranda is to the Anglo-Indian the real sitting-room of his bungalow. Be the interior ever so conveniently and exquisitely furnished, it is here that the men and women alike love to sit and read, talk, or doze.

I was whiling away my time in solitude one extremely hot afternoon, following drill, in the latter part of the month of March, 1857. I was seated on that portion of the veranda facing the river, pulling lazily at my cheroot, and vaguely wondering if the next mail from Calcutta would bring me a letter from father—for not yet had I had a line, or even heard a word, from him—when suddenly my attention was attracted by a strange, fairylike looking craft out on the water.

It was a sort of a gondola—a kind of craft much seen in India—but withal painted so artistically, it looked from where I sat not unlike a great swan. Only from the stern it was propelled by a giant Hindu, all garbed in white and bespangled with silver, who handled his oar with long, graceful, masterly measured strokes.

It was what I saw in the centre, however, that chiefly caught and held my attention.

There—ah! there, under a canopy of richest and glossiest drapery—a gilded dome, with silken curtains—sat, or rather, reclined, on a heap of crimson cushions, a woman who was a perfect model of loveliness. She seemed, in fact, like a

water nymph, fresh-risen, and not yet marred by the cold breezes of the cruel world.

Her height was of the medium, and her form, of exact symmetry, strong and vigorous, was divinely set off by a robe of creamy cashmere, confined at the waist by a belt of beaten gold. To perfect the scene, two ayahs, handsomely attired in blue saree, with silver ornaments, were seated in waiting on a tiger's skin, at her feet.

A spectacle of barbaric splendor, say you? Well, yes, it was; but not, on that account, any the less attractive, alluring, and once seen, never to be forgotten.

So thought I, at least; the more, no doubt, because that fair creature, looking up, met my gaze with interest, almost familiarity even, and continued to as the gondola swept on up stream. She did not drop her eyes, in fact, until nearly past, and then it was with cheeks suffused with scarlet rich as that in the rainbow. The next minute she was gone; the boat had disappeared behind the foliage of some trees in my garden.

Meanwhile, I sprang to my feet for the purpose of catching another view, when, like a flash, the absurdity of the whole came over me. I therefore sighed with relief that no one was present to see my foolishness, and sat down again.

Yes, I now considered that what I had just beheld was a fancy—a dream, and nothing more. My better sense told me it could not be true. Would any lady of the East, and especially of high caste, venture out like that, alone, unveiled, and above all, return the look of a stranger, a foreigner? Certainly not. Assuming that such a

person did exist, however, why had I not seen or heard of her before? Surely, I had been at Benares long enough now to have learned of all its notable inhabitants.

No, the more I thought of it, the more was I convinced that what I had seen had not been real. It was probably a phantasm, a hallucination. The day was just right for one's imagination to play him tricks, and, moreover, I had felt in the proper mood; truth to say, I was sleepy yet.

This, nevertheless, did not dispel the fact that, if my vision *had* been a dream, not only was it the most vivid one I had ever experienced, but also the most potent. It had left me filled with a feeling inexplicable further than a revelation grand and foreible, and which was not to be shaken off. What did it mean, therefore? That was what I wished to ascertain. Hence, there I was still sitting on the veranda, racking my brains to no purpose, when out glided my servant, Rummon, and gave me a note.

It was from Colonel Richerson, and requested my presence at his office without delay.

"Rummon," said I, "did you see that pretty little boat that's just passed by—up stream?"

"No, sahib," he answered, with a low salaam.

Assured now that my vision *had* been a dream, and wondering what tonic would be best for me (I feared, you see, for the pleasantness of my future dreams), I hastened to the colonel's.

"Hi, Henry! We're in for it now," cried my friend, leaning back from the desk where he had been writing.

"We are? How so?" I asked. "Are the natives going to make us trouble, after all?"

"Why, not as I know of. No, Henry; it's something entirely different. Read that, if you will." He handed me a piece of fine, cream-colored vellum, exquisitely perfumed, on which was neatly traced, with a bright scarlet ink, the following missive:

"BENARES, THE HOLY, March —, 1857.

"MY DEAR VERONA, *Wife of Captain Charles Winslow*: I trust this will find you well and happy, for I am coming to wait upon you this afternoon. I have something of the most vital importance to communicate, and would advise you to have the captain present, if possible; also, the new commandant and his wife, Colonel and Mrs. Richerson. Will you kindly look to this? And oh, don't fail to invite that Captain Henry Clermonte. He did a brave thing yesterday; he snatched Krishuna, the little daughter of my most faithful servant, Pyu Yet, from under the feet of an angry elephant, where, in another moment, she would have surely been crushed. It was at the risk of his life; I know it was, for I saw it all from my palanquin. It was nobly done. Pyu Yet will never forget it of him. Ah, think you he will see me, so I can thank him for it? I shall hope, remaining,

Yours, as ever,

"ZANEE, BEGAUM OF BENARES."

"Well, who is she?" I asked, when I had finished reading the letter. "Do you know anything about her, my dear colonel?"

“Yes, a little,” he replied. “Captain Winslow brought me her note a few minutes ago, which, he said, his wife had received this morning. Her full name, he told me, is Zance Kooran. It seems that by right she is a princess, her grandfather, her father’s father, having been a powerful rajah, who was enormously rich. Her father inherited only a portion of the power and wealth, however, and by his death, a few years ago, the title became extinct; and now the princess, who has neither brother nor sister, is sole representative of the royal race, and the inheritor of much wealth, in palaces, and gold, and precious stones.

“Happily, she is English educated, and a devout Christian; and, best of all, she is practically exempt from those horrid superstitions of her people, among whom she is doing great good by upholding and assisting missionary work, and establishing schools for teaching the coming generation.

“Moreover, she is very pretty and captivating, possessing charms both irresistible and inimitable. The captain and Mrs. Winslow know her well, and say she is just as good as she is beautiful. All of which would be quite remarkable—a blending of character entirely out of place, perhaps—were it not for the fact that her mother was a pure-bred Greek, from whom she has been borne to represent the European type, and that, it seems, in the highest form.

“But come with me, Henry, and learn for yourself what she is like. I expect by this time she is waiting for us at Captain Winslow’s, and very anxious, evidently, to thank you for that little exploit of yesterday. Ah, I didn’t know before

that you practiced being the good Samaritan when off duty. It's commendable in you, of course, but there is no need of your being quite so mum and modest about it; really, there isn't," he said, in a well-feigned injured tone. Then—"How came you to rescue the child named Krishuna, anyway?"

I related the incident to him, for such in truth it was—my chancing to see the little girl in front of the infuriated animal, which had broken away from its keepers and was madly charging down the narrow street we were in, so that I had barely had time to snatch her up in my arms and leap aside ere we both sustained harm.

I had not learned whose child she was, not even of what caste, for she had at once escaped from me, ignorant of the danger to which she had been exposed, and I had given the circumstance no further thought till now. According to the princess' letter, however, deeds of kindness were as much appreciated out here, among the heathens, as elsewhere in the world; but, as to that matter, a day was coming when the fact, though I little knew it then, would be impressed upon me forcibly enough.

"Did I understand you to say, colonel, she is already waiting for us?" I asked.

"Yes, Henry; I think so. Leastwise, Captain Winslow said they were expecting her every minute in her gondola. I don't suppose you have seen her pass? What! you have? Oh, you rascal! Well, what do you think of her? Did she tally at all with the description I've given you?"

I made him no intelligible reply. I could

not; my mind was too much occupied. With what? Why, the fact that if the princess was expected in a gondola, then it must have been hers I had seen from my veranda overlooking the river; in which case my vision *had* been real, and *not* a dream, after all.

But no, it could not be; no creature as fair as she who had looked up to me, ever existed in flesh and blood. If she did—ah, a strange mixture of doubts and hopes assailed me as I set out with my friend for the captain's, a little further up the river. His wife, Lillian, had preceded us thither.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT ZANEE KOORAN HAD TO COMMUNICATE.

ON arriving at Captain Winslow's bungalow, the captain received us.

"Glad to see you, gentlemen," said he, smiling.

"Has the princess come?" asked the colonel.

"Yes, she is here. This way, if you please;" and he conducted us into his large, airy drawing-room, the low, broad windows of which overlooked the river, with other windows and doors, so arranged they could catch all the air that might be stirring.

What the captain had told us was true. The princess *was* there. Dignified as a queen, she sat on a divan between his wife and the colonel's; and oh, of the beautiful being who had looked up to me from her gondola with such interest I could have asked for no better counterpart, only now she was more beautiful than then—more consummately charming, in fact, than any form of loveliness I had ever beheld or conceived of in my wildest and most elysian dreams; aye, even here,

*"Far away in the uttermost East
In the passionate East, in the mystical East,"*

where, ordinarily, nothing of flesh and blood can be more beautiful in all respects than those Indian maidens of the higher caste in their prime. For it is no exaggeration to say that there is generally with them a glorious delicacy of loveliness in their every contour and feature; a splendor in their eyes and hair, and in the mellow tints of their exquisite skin; a fitness in their garments and a fascination in their movements, belonging to no other women on earth. Even girls of the lower classes, before prematurely made old by child-bearing and other labor, have a symmetry of form and a grace of motion that is poetry itself.

But here—here before me was a lady—seemingly a girl of not over nineteen or twenty—who had all the characteristic beauty of her race, and more.

True, her skin was not quite as white as a European's; but its color was withal so pure and warm, and her features so exactly proportionate, they were ample compensation, and her swarthiness was scarcely to be noticed; certainly not when one took into consideration, as I did, the infinite sweetness of her expression, and the radiance of her frank and truthful eyes, which portrayed an inner beauty, as transcendent in its loveliness as was the more palpable splendor that appeared on the surface.

Her dress, as I have mentioned before, consisted of cream-colored cashmere, and, barring the belt of beaten gold—a piece of unique workmanship—which held it in place at the waist, her sole ornaments were two large brilliants in the pendants hanging from her ears, and a massive diamond

in the covering of her bosom; that is, not taking into consideration her hair, which, owing to her Greek mother, was silky and curling. This was confined at the forehead by a fillet of plain gold, whence it floated freely over her shoulders and, thence, down to the girdle.

Led forward and introduced to her, with the colonel, by Captain Winslow, I felt as if in the presence of a being far above and beyond me. She seemed like an immortal. I questioned yet the validity of what I had seen on the river from my veranda.

Happily, however, my sense of awe, as well as skepticism, passed away the moment she began to speak. Her voice was soft and musical, and this, with her graceful deportment, placed me directly at my ease.

"I thank you, my dear friends," she said, as soon as as we were seated and refreshments had been served; "I thank you all for complying with my request. You make me feel that I am honored indeed."

The colonel and I bowed to her.

"And *you*, Captain Clermonte, I thank particularly," she continued, turning her large, dark lustrous eyes full upon me. "It was very brave, not to say noble, of you to risk your life for little Krishuna's. I thank you for it, not so much on my own account, as her father's, Pyu Yet, whom nothing would please more than to thank you in person. Perhaps, if it would not be overtaxing you, you could grant him his desire?"

"O princess," said I, bowing to her again, "I should enjoy, certainly, meeting your estimable

servant. But—pardon me—I fear you, as well as he, have overrated my services. As a matter of truth, I did only what any other countryman of mine would have done under the circumstances.”

What a ravishing smile she gave me as she turned and nodded to our host, who thereupon arose and left the room; quickly to return, however, ushering into our presence the giant Hindu I had seen propelling her gondola—a man of about my own age, whose actions betokened the strength and cunning of a tiger.

“O sahib! I thank you, I thank you,” he said, in excellent English, prostrating himself so low before me, after Captain Winslow had presented him, that his beard swept the floor. “You saved my Krishuna—my sweet little Krishuna. Would, sahib, I could serve you with my life!”

“Pyu Yet,” said I, placing my hand solemnly on his massive shoulder, “I am glad to know you are such a devoted father, and your kind offer I shall not forget; but in remembrance of her whom you already serve, I should be sorry to have you endanger yourself for me. So, my good fellow, your obeying and watching faithfully over the princess, will please me better than anything else you can do.”

Lifting his turbaned head, he gave me a grateful look, while the princess, with a little laugh and an exquisite glance to me, signaled him to leave the room.

“He is a trusty, obedient servant,” she said, when he was gone, “and very brave. I am never afraid to go anywhere when he is with me. You have won in him, Captain Clermonte, a true friend,

as likewise you have in me. But, for that matter, I like you all. That is the reason why I have asked you to meet me here to-day. I have knowledge of certain things, you see, which it is of importance for *you* to know. But, before proceeding further, I want to ask if each of you can promise me you will breathe to no living soul, not so it can get to any of my people, what I have to tell you?"

I was, for my part, and so I observed were several of the others, about to give the promise, when the colonel checked me with a gesture.

"Princess," said he, "would it be wise for you to impart information to us under such conditions? Might you not be placing yourself in peril?"

"Ah, that is the least of my concern," she replied; "that is the least of my concern, considering, as I do, that the safety of you and your friends here, as well as every European's in this land, is at stake."

By this we of course received a surprise, a shock, and I, if no one else did, which was exceedingly doubtful, recalled with sinking heart the forebodings I had heard before stepping my foot in India.

"Well, even thus," the colonel continued, perfectly composed in appearance, "I should dread to have you compromise yourself in any way. Perhaps the matter could be disclosed to us by some other agent than through you. Have you thought of that, fair lady?"

"I have, sir; but it is useless," she responded with a sad smile. "No one can very well enlighten you except myself; none have in most re-

spects a better knowledge of the affair, and, further, all my people are expected in a general way to keep it secret from you Europeans. Woe to the one who does not, be his treachery discovered. But what if *I* should tell you? I am not bound, remember, by either oaths or restrictions of any kind to keep silent; and—did not your chief-of-staff here voluntarily expose himself for one of my household yesterday? Ah, my friends, my only danger would lie in your accidentally, that is, thoughtlessly betraying me; and that, I am sure, you would, every one of you, be careful not to do. Hence, let me warn you so you may be on your guard, and ready to defend yourselves when the hour of need shall come; for if left in ignorance much longer, I fear, I know, in fact, that your lives will ultimately pay the forfeit. Give me, then, your promise you won't betray me, and listen."

"Really, princess, I can hardly bring myself to believe we are in any such danger as you say," said the colonel regretfully. "Surely, you don't mean to imply that the Sepoys are plotting against us, do you?"

"Alas, sir, I have the greatest fears they are, and am not at all surprised at your feeling secure. But," and she looked at him sorrowfully, "unless you, all of you, can give me your word you will not betray me, I shall hardly dare reveal anything, though I *know* you wouldn't, of your own free will, get me into trouble."

"Oh, pardon me—pardon me, princess; I'd lost sight of that, I had, 'pon my honor!" cried the colonel, in much confusion. And profusely

apologizing, he gave the promise reluctantly, as did the rest of us now, though not on that account any the less sincerely, for, like him, we felt it *was* a pity for one so young and so fair to hazard herself in our behalf.

She thanked us charmingly—not only in words, but by the glorious expression of relief which overspread her features, this being followed instantly by one of deep solemnity, while the wondrous eyes seemed to gaze far off beyond the present scene.

“My friends,” she began, in a low, earnest tone, full of heart and meaning, “my friends, you must listen well to my words, for what I have to say is of great moment, and, as I have intimated, it is doubtful if another person exists, leastwise not here in Benares, who can tell it with knowledge and understanding. There is a man named Dhundoo Punt. Have any of you heard of him?”

“Yes, princess; I think so,” said the colonel.

“He is Rajah of Bithoor—up there above Cawnpore; is he not, Captain Winslow?”

“He is, sir,” the captain replied; “he is also known as Nana Sahib.”

“That’s he!” the princess exclaimed, with an ominous shake of her head; “that’s the man whom I fear many of your people will know to their sorrow ere long, unless something is done to check his career. Ah, listen while I tell you of him; then, perhaps, you will understand.”

We were gazing at her in surprise, mingled with no little apprehension.

“He is young yet, is Dhundoo Punt,” she continued; “just a few years past thirty, and as am-

bitious as any man can very well be. There are reasons for it. He was born in the Deccan, of Brahmanic parents, a good family, but poor, and while still an infant adopted by a nabob of Bithoor, named Bajee Rao, who was chief of the Mahrattas; a thing, you know, that is often done among my people. But Bajee Rao was deposed by the British in after years, who gave him, in requital, a rich estate near to Bithoor, and settled upon him, for the maintenance of this and his household, a pension of eighty thousand pounds a year.

"Well, so much for the old rajah, except that he died six years ago, without leaving direct heirs. The fact was, he never had any children of his own. Therefore, as the British Government refuses to recognize heirs by adoption, the estate and pension were both declared as having lapsed to the East India Company.

"Now, all this, as you may well infer, greatly incensed the adopted son, Dhundoo Punt. Not only did he declare the action wrong, but sought by every means in his power to have it reversed, even to sending an agent to England for the purpose at his own expense. His efforts, however, were unavailing. The sum was too large for your people to let go if they could help it, and they claimed, with great show of reason, that this charity child, of no blood relation with the old chief, had no legal right to it. Accordingly he never received it. The most he was allowed was a handsome residence at Bithoor, where he has accumulated much wealth, and where, alas!

as Rajah Nana, he has acquired great authority and influence.

"I say alas, in that, though loud have lately been his professions of love for your people, I know in his heart there is plenty of bitterness; and that he is seeking means of vengeance. How do I know? Because he has recently been to me, in an earnest and a dictatorial mood. He came, moreover, in disguise; and what do you suppose he wanted? He wanted me to let him have a million of money, of English pounds, promising, swearing, in fact, he would repay it. But when I asked him how he could ever hope to repay such a sum, he hesitated to answer. It wasn't that he lacked for language, for twice he started to speak, yet held back his words. But, at length he said, with a significance not to be mistaken: '*I will take it from our English masters. If they give it not freely, I will find a way to force it.*' Yes, my friends, those were his exact words; and oh, his face when he spoke was the face of a demon!

"'*I will find a way to force it!*' Is not that sufficient to set one thinking? Will it not bear consideration? Look at your army here in India. In the British possessions of Hindustan, are fully two hundred thousand native soldiers, what you call Sepoys. On the other hand, how many European troops are there, taking all who are scattered throughout the country?"

"Why, not more than thirty-eight thousand, princess," replied Captain Winslow.

"Yes, that is about the number. Well, now, again," she continued, "look at the composition

of a regiment of Sepoys. Take, for example, the Thirty-seventh, stationed here. In that regiment, when it is full, are one thousand private soldiers, one hundred and twenty native commissioned, and twenty native non-commissioned, officers; in all, eleven hundred and forty Sepoys. Am I right?" she asked, with a smile.

"Indeed, you are," said the colonel, looking at her with admiration.

"Ah, I thought so," she resumed, arching her eyebrows. "For, you see, I asked Dhundoo Punt about it; I asked him, in fact, all I could think of concerning the military. I did it purposely. And what did he do? Why, answered my questions—every one of them—unsuspiciously. Hence, I drew it out of him how he has made a study of this matter; and that it is not for any good, I shall soon convince you.

"To return to the subject, therefore, in the Thirty-seventh Regiment how many European officers have you?"

"Twenty-five, if the number was complete," I answered.

"But is it ever complete?" she asked.

"No," replied the colonel; "no, princess, I find some of the officers are absent, always absent, either sick or on furlough, or, what is more likely, on detached duty elsewhere."

"That is it," she exclaimed; "that is exactly what the Nana said himself. Oh, he has made a study of it, there isn't a doubt.

"But, to come back to the point once more, what are the Sepoys? They are not brutes, are they? No, they are men, men who can reason as well as

you can, my friends, and who can as easily be brought to see where wrong has been done, especially when it affects themselves. And you won't deny, will you, that a great wrong was done when Lord Dalhousie took the territory of Oude, a territory, remember, far greater than your own fair land of England; when he took that, I say, away from the people who had been born and reared its owners, more, robbed them of their estates, their country, and placed over them rulers who were foreign and strange to them.

"Yes, that was a heinous wrong; and now—now the worst of it is, the evil from the same still lives. Therefore, with an eloquent chief, like Nana Sahib, would it be difficult, do you think, to stir up the Sepoys, at least the most of them, to open rebellion; that is, taking it for granted that such a man had resolved on such a course?"

"No, princess; probably not," said the colonel gravely.

"Well, listen now: While Dhundoo Punt was here, which occurred no further back than a week ago, he had a number of interviews with your native officers; and, like his coming to see me, he did not visit them openly, as is his wont when he visits. How do I know? Because it chanced I learned he was in Benares the day he arrived, and accordingly had some of my most trusted servants, particularly Pyu Yet, who, for all his size, is an adept spy—follow him constantly and report to me his conduct. Thus I learned that he ventured up here at night on several different occasions, and stole into the subahdars' quarters, only to steal away again, like an evil spirit!

"Hence it was I wouldn't let him have a rupee, though it is doubtful if I should anyway, so much had I always distrusted and despised him. I told him, bluntly, that my wealth was where I could not readily command it; and I further informed him—for I would not be a coward—that I had no confidence in his ability to pay. Said I to him: 'If you can force a loan to repay me, you can force it on your own account.' For that he pretended to thank me; and then, when he arose to leave, warned me not to speak to a human being of what he had said to me. Ah, wasn't that enough to condemn him?" she asked eagerly.

"It was, princess," the colonel replied, with troubled brow, while the rest of us sighed and shuddered, shook within ourselves, as it were, as we thought of the danger she might be incurring by revealing to us so much. "Yes, it places the Nana in a bad light," the colonel continued, "a very bad light. But what did he do next? Can you tell us that?"

"I can to a certain degree," she answered. "He set out soon after for Cawnpore, where your people have an important garrison. He contemplated, I think, returning to his home at Bithoor, which, you know, is eight miles above there; but he may keep on to Delhi. I'd sooner think he would, for there is evil in his mind, I tell you, and his heart is fraught with vengeance.

"And now, my friends, I have only to add, be on your guard. As you can see, even here in Secrole you are threatened; and should the Sepoys ever find fault with the cartridges of their new muskets, or refuse to use them, as the Nine-

teenth Regiment did at Berhampore last month, know that Dhundoo Punt has put the thought into their minds. Know, too, that great danger is hidden in the event. Aye, when the time shall come, and come it will, I verily believe, unless something is done, and done speedily, to prevent it; when the time shall come, I say, that the Sepoys refuse to touch a cartridge because the fat of an animal is on it, prepare yourselves for graver things to follow; nerve your hearts then for the very worst."

"Well, princess, you have the matter down fine, 'pon my soul!" cried the colonel, with a deep-drawn sigh. "If the Sepoys should want to seek a cause for fault-finding, they could hardly choose a better one than you have mentioned."

This, alas! was true. The Government had just placed in the hands of the native troops the new Enfield rifle, the then latest improvement in fire-arms, for use in the field; and that the greatest possible accuracy in firing might be attained with it, the cartridges were made to fit exceedingly close—much more so than those used in the old smooth-bore muskets. Where they dropped freely into the chambers, these had to be driven home with the rammer; and that it might be the more readily done, the cartridges were greased—generally with common tallow, a mixture of the fats from beef and mutton. Moreover, there was a bit of superfluous paper at the end of the cartridge, which the soldier, in the regular manner of loading, had to bite off with his teeth; and, as you probably know, the Hindus have a prejudice, a religious horror against

putting the fat of certain animals into the mouth, that of the cow and pig above all others. Hence the reason for the colonel's remarks, who thus continued:

"But, princess, our Sepoys have not shown the least inclination yet of refusing to bite the cartridges. Just the same, I can see how a designing man of their own people, a chieftain among them, who had their confidence, might excite their imaginations and arouse their worst passions; in proof whereof you have cited one case, that of the Nineteenth's mutinous behavior at Berham-pore."

"Yes, and who knows but that affair, as well as the First Madras Regiment's refusing to march from Vizianagram to Kurnol without their families, didn't originate with Nana Sahib? Mightn't he have planned them as forerunners of greater evils?" asked Captain Winslow thoughtfully.

"Certainly," replied the princess; "ah, and now you have spoken, I believe it was so. Yes," she added, reflectively, "'twould be just like Dhundoo Punt to adopt such measures for rousing the people; he could thus make known to them his designs, and steel their hearts for vengeance—his vengeance."

"But," said I—at a venture, "the Nineteenth will probably be disbanded. Perhaps that'll have a tendency to put a stop to any further premeditated trouble."

"Oh, no, it won't!" she cried, flashing me a look of surprise; "no, indeed. Rather, it will be one of the worst things that can happen; it will

scatter far and wide the germs of treason and revolt, and that is just what Dhundoo Punt wants."

"I fear you are right," said Captain Winslow, with a dubious shake of his head. "The disbanding of a regiment—a native one—is a serious affair in this land. It is a weighty penalty, in fact, for it deprives every subahdar of his position, every Sepoy of his pension, and, further, all those who have attained to that age where they can no longer be received as recruits for the army, yet have no choice of labor but to remain soldiers, as a means of livelihood, even though they be Brahmans of high caste. Do you see how it is now, Captain Clermonte?"

"I think I do," I answered; and thenceforth refrained from making any more attempts to air my ignorance.

"Oh, well, perhaps it won't be as bad as that," said the colonel hopefully. "One thing is certain: it doesn't seem as if the Nana can have much influence, or exercise any great authority, so far south as Berhampore."

"I know it doesn't," the princess replied; "but I believe, nevertheless, it is so. And that is the reason, coupled with what I have already learned, why I fear Dhundoo Punt, unless his career is checked, will avail himself of the superstitions of the natives and incite them to murder your people, not only at Meerut, Lucknow, Delhi, Cawnpore, and other places, but—even here."

"Great powers! I hope not," cried the colonel, aghast. "Why, that would be horrible—something unheard of." Then, in a milder intonation, "Well, princess, thanks to you, we will keep

our eyes open and if trouble does come, be prepared to meet it."

"God grant you may!" she murmured fervently.

"But you speak of the Nana's career being checked; have you anything special in mind by that?" he asked.

"I have," she replied. "I would suggest that he be arrested—in other words, placed in confinement at once."

"Arrested? Confined? Ah, pardon me, princess, but that couldn't very well be done without cause, and Nana Sahib, you know, has committed no crime yet which can be proved against him; moreover, he is far away from us, provided we had the authority to detain him."

"I fear, sir, I haven't expressed myself clear enough," she said, with a flush. "I don't mean for *you* to assume the responsibility of taking him into custody, but rather that you could assist in bringing it about, and so save, perhaps, thousands of lives—innocent lives. The new Governor-general is a good man, isn't he? Well, with the knowledge you now possess, what is to hinder you having this matter brought before him, and the necessity urged upon him of his selecting some trusty men—men brave, sagacious, prudent—and investing them with the power to take Dhundoo Punt into custody on suspicion?"

"It could be done, I suppose," said the colonel reflectively; "but do you think it would improve the situation?"

"I do, if the execution of it were not delayed too long. Yes, arrest Nana Sahib and place him where none of the Sepoys can have further com-

munication with him, and I'll warrant there will be no trouble at all. Of course, the work should be done quietly—secretly, if possible. But if anything serious did arise from it, mark me, it could be much more readily met and overcome than that which is sure to ensue if he is left to come and go at will, and confer at pleasure with the native troops.

"Forgive me, my friends, for taking such liberties; but I tell you I feel this matter deeply, and—I fear much."

"Dear princess, don't speak of such a thing as forgiveness," we cried in chorus; "allow us to say, rather, we thank you for all time, for what you have told us."

She smiled at this gratefully, and her eyes shone with pleasure—the more so because at the same moment the wife of the captain and colonel took her, each of them, by the hand and kissed her.

"Remember, you are not to breathe my name to another person in connection with what I have told you; that much you have promised."

"Oh, princess, don't fear," said Mrs. Richerson, kissing her again. "We love you—we do, every one of us too well to let one word escape which would endanger you. Why, I didn't dream you were such a dear. I want you to come and visit me the very first chance you have—to-morrow, if you will. Can you?"

"I see nothing to hinder me," she replied smilingly. She arose to depart.

While I was escorting her down to the river, she informed me she had once passed six months in Paris,

"That was when father was alive," she said. "He wanted me to finish my education in French; but I never did. I didn't like it. I liked English best—better even than my own language."

This, of course, delighted me.

Having watched the giant, Pyu Yet, propel her gondola out of sight, I hastened back to the drawing-room where I had left my friends, and where I found them still seated, in earnest consultation as to what would be the best means of setting before Lord Canning the project of checking Nana Sahib; the outcome of which was, we at length decided, that Captain Winslow, who could the most readily be spared of any of us (though that was saying little enough), should undertake the enterprise alone, and on arriving at Calcutta receive Colonel Neill, the regular commandant of Benares, into his confidence. Through him we thought he would be more likely to make a favorable impression upon His Lordship; and for that reason, should he meet him while *en route* to the capital,—Neill was now expected home every day,—he was to try to prevail upon him to turn back and accompany him thither.

CHAPTER V.

A DELICATE MISSION.

DURING the absence of Captain Winslow, we had letters from him only once. Those, written on his arrival at Calcutta, came by courier. Their chief import was that he had found Colonel Neill, and that he was perfectly willing to lend him all the assistance possible toward getting him a favorable audience with the Governor-general. With that he had to be content.

Truth to tell, it had been a part of our arrangements with the captain to intrust no information to letters which might, by getting lost, or being miscarried, give Nana Sahib's emissaries (if he had any, and we felt confident he must), evidence that we were suspicious of him. Hence we did not expect to hear anything very definite from our friend until he should return. But we had looked for him to write us occasionally. Therefore, when at the end of several weeks he failed to do so, it could not help but make us nervous and uneasy; especially since certain things had occurred that gave color to Zanee Kooran's prognostications of there being a general uprising of the Hindus at hand.

In the first place it had come to light that

chupatties (a kind of flat cake made of flour and water, and which constitutes a staple article of diet in India) had long been freely circulated among the native troops all over the country. This alone was a bad omen, in that, though the exact meaning of the custom is a mystery to all save the initiated, it implies to prepare or make ready; and as the cakes are never so employed unless serious mischief is contemplated, the impression made by the discovery on the European population at the time of which I write was anything but agreeable.

Then, like a thunder-bolt, had come that shocking tragedy at Barrackpore, a few miles from Calcutta, namely, the shooting of the European sergeant-major of the Thirty-fourth Native Infantry, and the cutting down of an officer, all by one of its own members—a Sepoy named Mangul Pandey—who had thereupon exhorted his countrymen, in vain it happily turned out, to rise to arms.

Thus the situation had gone from bad to worse. Rumors of disaffection grew, until they were current from nearly every station throughout Bengal.

At Arga, Umbullah, and other places, incendiary fires not only frequently broke out, but anonymous letters were occasionally intercepted, urging the Sepoys to revolt. In Lucknow the situation became so serious that Sir Henry Lawrence, the commissioner of Oude, telegraphed the Governor-general for unlimited powers, which he said he would not abuse. Needless to say, his request had been promptly granted. The fact was, the *Bombay Times* of the first week in May, rep-

resented the whole country, from Calcutta to Lahore, as either in open mutiny, or upon the verge of it. Abiding by reports, the Punjab alone remained faithful; therefore, if trouble did come, the troops of the Madras and Bombay presidencies would be the sole ones to rely upon for aid. That would be a slender reserve, but, of course, better than none.

To us, the outlook had hardly reached such an appalling state as this. There were some stations still—important ones, too—that appeared to be all right. Our own, for example. Here at Benares the Sepoys continued, despite mysterious happenings and foretold calamities, to be very docile and obedient; but no more so than did those at Cawnpore. These were the two places through which, the princess had especially warned us, Nana Sahib would be most likely to strike at the Europeans first. On the contrary, however, the latest advices from Cawnpore represented him as more friendly than ever toward the English, and ready to loan them assistance in the way of men and guns, should there be the least likelihood of the Sepoys making trouble.

Hence, was it any wonder we were kept in a quandary as to what awaited us in the future?

Our gravest fears were aroused by Captain Winslow's unaccountable silence; we could only speculate as to what the outcome of his mission had been and, hopeful for the best, continue to believe that the Governor-general had quietly sent him, with Colonel Neill—from whom we likewise received not a line—to Cawnpore, to make investigations.

Certainly nothing of less importance and delicacy could have kept him away from us so long, with no word of explanation, and especially from his wife, Verona.

Very dearly she loved her husband, and withal was a faithful, devoted wife. But, luckily, for her, she was also a patient, courageous little body—just the mate for such a man as the captain, who was about three years her senior, and as prompt and prudent, and possessed of as much dash and courage, as any soldier in Her Majesty's army. She therefore bore his absence bravely; she bore it, in fact, with a resignation few women could have shown better.

Of course we did all we could to lighten her sorrow; but if ever she was induced to forget her grief, I ascribe it chiefly to Zanee Kooran. She visited her daily and occasionally took her in her gondola, to her palace in the city, there to keep and entertain her perhaps till the following day.

I was thus afforded ample opportunities of meeting her; and that, needless to say, gave me indescribable delight.

When brought face to face with her I always felt, as upon the occasion when introduced to her in Captain Winslow's drawing-room, that there was a glory of innocence—aye, a reflection of God's own light about her form and features, which tinged the worship her loveliness commanded with a touch of reverential awe.

You who, it may be, have never known what it is to love—to have the full tide of a pure passion poured suddenly into your heart, flooding it, may smile at this, but I assure you, it was so. In-

deed, the bolt that sped from her dark, lustrous eyes that afternoon as she gazed up to me from her gondola, when first I saw her from my veranda facing the river, had gone straight home, thrilling me with the inrush of an unabating, unique emotion—not only at that time, but ever since.

Though I surmised through her every word and action, that Zanee Kooran cared for me in return, I felt reluctant, no matter how often the opportunity presented itself, to tell her of my own affection, lest the surprise, the joy of it should have caused her to vanish from my sight, as glittering, glistening bubbles do when smote by even the slightest, gentlest breeze, and so obliterate the rainbow promise set upon my sky. In truth, it was by chance only I came to reveal myself to her.

This was how it happened.

She and I were walking one sultry morning in the grove below Captain Winslow's bungalow, down the river. She had just been to call on the captain's wife, and we were alone.

"Well, how did you find your friend, to-day, princess?" asked I at length, happy in the witchery of having her at my side.

"If the captain doesn't come home, or send her tidings of himself, soon, it may be impossible to pacify her. She has almost lost faith in his having been sent to Cawnpore. And to tell the truth, I am about agreeing with her."

"You are? What has happened for you to talk so, princess?"

"A number of things, Captain Clermonte. I

had a letter last night from Dhundoo Punt himself who, in part, wrote me this: 'My Dear Begaum, I cannot begin to tell you of the pleasure, the satisfaction it affords me to know you are taking such an interest in the Europeans of Benares; I can only say that those here at Cawnpore are not one whit less interesting to me. Therefore, keep alive your interest, for you may rest assured I shall mine; in which case neither of us will have cause to fret, since, no matter what *happens*, harm, remember, shall not befall *you*.' And then—then," she continued scornfully, "he had the audacity to allude to that money—the million of pounds—I refused to loan him last March, saying he expected me to get it ready for him soon."

"The scoundrel! The infamous wretch! Dared he write you all that?" I asked, growing cold and hot by turns.

"Yes, every word of it," she replied.

"But," said I, becoming more alarmed, "a threat's expressed in his letter; don't you see there is?"

"Why, of course; and that is what worries me—makes me think, as Verona does, that the captain has failed in his mission—in other words, been found out by the Nana—and is now perhaps in deadly peril."

"Oh, but it is *you*, princess, I am thinking of. He threatens you—*you* yourself, not the captain—that is, not him any more than the rest of us Europeans. He has discovered you are befriending us, and—my God! *Should* there be a uni-

versal rising of the natives, where would you turn for safety?"

"I?" she exclaimed, with a little laugh. "Oh, don't bother about me, captain. I am not afraid of Dhundoo Punt; if worse comes to worse, I have my own retainers to rely upon—all trusty men, who, if it was demanded of them, would each lay down his life for me."

"But," I gasped, "you—you surely wouldn't stay here and attempt to brave him, would you?"

"Certainly not, if the circumstances didn't warrant it."

"Ah, pardon me, princess; but what do you mean?" I cried, my hair fairly standing on end; for never had she looked to me more lovely.

"Simply this, Captain Clerinonte. So long as you and your friends are in danger, I must not desert you. And I fear—I know," she added, with a sigh, "that you are menaced. How do I know? Because my servant, Pyu Yet, overheard some subahdars consulting together in a deserted alley yesterday, and from what he gleaned of their conversation—he could not catch all of it, he said—evil is contemplated here in Secrole very soon. The Sepoys, it appears, will refuse to obey you Englishmen outright some day when on parade; but what they will further do I can't say, for Pyu Yet was not able to learn anything more. Happily, however, he isn't the only spy in my service, and I hope for that reason to discover soon what their plans are—in part, at least—and give your people knowledge of the same, so they can be prepared to parry the blow when it falls."

"But you should be all the more thoughtful for your own safety then," I exclaimed in anguish.

"Oh, I am not afraid yet for myself. Captain Winslow gives me the most concern now. I fear I have, indirectly, been the cause of his trouble; and I feel on that account I should get him out of it if I can. I shall, unless he sends us a message in a few days, dispatch Pyu Yet to search for him; and, furthermore, have him ascertain, if he can, whether Dhundoo Punt has really discovered we are suspicious of him, and aiming to intercept his designs."

"Oh, no, no! Don't—don't think of it!" I cried, nearly beside myself. "Why, that would be madness, to show Nana Sahib that you are his avowed enemy! Should trouble come, what might not happen then? No, princess, as you value your life, your liberty—oh, my God! as you value your honor, don't, I implore you, do any such thing. Already you have done enough for us, and more. Why not be content with that, I pray you?"

"Because," she said, tearfully, "I cannot, and see Verona's grief; I cannot and know of the danger you are all in. No, if I should leave the captain to his fate, my conscience would never be at ease. And I fear that he—oh! save me, Captain Clermonte," she suddenly cried, throwing up her hands wildly. "Save me! Quick, quick!"

Hardly had she made her appeal before my arms were about her, for, owing to our having been walking quite close to the river—she next to it, as it chanced, where the bank was very steep and several yards down—the ground on which she stood had given way and would, in another mo-

ment, have precipitated her with it into the water, but for my thus opportunely catching her and, instead, bringing her safely to my side.

I felt her breath fan my cheek, and heard the excited beatings of her heart, so near was her form to mine. Happening at that moment to meet her eyes, I found them shining like stars with gratitude; they seemed, as it were, to flash love-darts into my very soul.

Therefore, I did a rash thing; I forgot myself and kissed her.

"Oh, forgive me, princess! Forgive me," I cried regretfully, and dropping upon my knees before her with as much humility as if she had been a goddess, I tried in tones which trembled in spite of me, to excuse my conduct, by telling her how I had feared for her safety, and how much I had longed to be her defender—her knight, her champion; and as I pleaded I felt her hand, which I still retained, tremble—nay, pulsate in unison with my own.

Owing to this, I became emboldened and poured out to her the whole of my long pent-up sentiments, stealing at her, the while, occasional glances, when—ah, could it be true?—I saw the red blood waver on her cheeks; saw even the tell-tale love-lights gather in her eyes. Another moment, and—oh, ravishing sight!—I saw her melt into a perfection of glory—an aurora defying description, for again I was standing erect and holding her in my arms—this time with all the tenderness of an angel—and murmuring to her, ecstatically, the dream of my new-found, and now fully realized happiness.

It was a long time we stood there, Zanee Kooran and I, hand clasped in hand, and talking of ourselves. For when love has once established a clear course between two souls, the current of conversation can seldom run too fast or too strong.

Being so intensely absorbed in each other, we failed to observe any one near us until we were startled by a girlish voice calling out, "Aha, I've found you at last, have I?"

"Oh, is it *you*, Verona?" asked the princess, with a smile.

"Yes, and what do you think? The captain has come!"

"He has?" we both exclaimed.

"Yes, Charlie is here," she panted, as she approached us excitedly. "He's come, I tell you, and, what's best, is perfectly safe and sound."

"The Lord be praised!" murmured Zanee Kooran fervently. "But, my dear Verona, I fear you are fatigued—very much exhausted, aren't you?" she inquired, gently disengaging my hand from hers.

"Oh, I can't help it, princess, the captain's return has upset me—taken me so by surprise. And then—why, I've had an awful time finding you. Where have you two been so long, anyway?"

"Ahem! When did you say the captain arrived?" I at this juncture put in.

"Just a little while ago. And Colonel Neill is with him. They both wrote us several times, but all their letters must have been intercepted, the same as ours, rather, none of which reached

them after the first batch; and, for that matter, only one of our telegrams."

"Ha! Doesn't that prove, Captain Clermonte, Dhundoo Punt has his spies everywhere?" asked Zanée Kooran, looking at me significantly. I made her no response further than by shaking my head dubiously and—with a sinking heart.

"Yes, they think it is the work of the natives," Verona in the meantime rattled on; "and Colonel Neill, I can tell you, is very angry about it. Ugh! If the Sepoys get him after them once, they'll wish they hadn't, that's all. But oh! I've forgotten to tell you; we're to start—you, Mr. Clermonte, Colonel and Mrs. Richerson, Charlie and myself—just as soon as we can make ourselves ready, for Cawnpore. The Governor-general has ordered it; yes, and he's also invested the colonel with authority to arrest Nana Sahib and confine him at any time he may think it considerate to do so."

"He has done all that?" asked the princess, in a tone of surprise and disappointment.

"Why, yes," Verona replied in a matter-of-fact way. "You see, Canning kept deferring the thing by putting Colonel Neill and Charlie off as often as they approached or petitioned him to give them or some one else, permission to examine into affairs at Cawnpore, telling them that he couldn't bring himself to believe Nana Sahib was at heart unfriendly, or seeking means by which to overthrow British rule, and that if they would only wait a little longer they would see he was right; but it seems he received some kind of secret tidings from the vicinity of Cawnpore

or Bithoor a few days ago, of such an alarming nature, his faith in Nana Sahib was at last terribly shaken. Hence the reason for the present appointments, there being no other officers qualified, or at liberty, or something of that sort, for him to invest with such an important mission."

"Well, I must say I am sorry to hear that," said Zanee Kooran, with a sigh; "I regret, exceedingly, the appointments couldn't have fallen elsewhere. Letting matters go as they have, is a great mistake."

"But why in the world will you ladies have to accompany us?" I asked of the captain's wife, filled with a feeling of exultation for a moment as I thought of how I might yet obtain a chance to throttle the Rajah of Bithoor—him who had made us all this trouble, and caused the Begaum, now my own true love at last, so much worry.

"Why, so you will have good protection—a staunch, invincible guard," Verona replied. "Isn't that original?" she asked, laughing. "Oh, but it's perfectly true," she continued; "that is, in a sense. You see, if Lillian and I are along, the natives—of whom those in some districts through which we shall have to pass are reported to be very uneasy—will be less likely, so the Governor-general and Colonel Neill think, to molest you officers; and I take it we are expected to escort you to Cawnpore in safety, and—well, just as soon as we can. Accordingly, with your consent, Mr. Clermonte, I will now begin the exercise of *my* authority by reminding you that you are wanted at headquarters."

"Thank you, Mrs. Winslow," said I, bowing to

her; "may the pleasure of having such devoted attendants make *me* always as mindful of my duty on our journey as I am now." And with another bow to her, and then one to the princess, on whose brow I saw, to my vexation, a troubled, perplexed look, I set out for the commandant's office, roundly cursing, in my mind, this enterprise which was going to take me so far away from my betrothed. For now we understood each other, I would fain have remained where she was, ready to protect her should the need arise; and that it would arise was becoming more apparent every day, every hour. Indeed, almost the first words Captain Winslow greeted me with were, that the Sepoys at Meerut had murdered their officers, together with all the European men, women and children they could find, and were now marching upon Delhi! The dispatch had only just arrived, and details were lacking; but it was evidently true, and more, that the north-west provinces were in a state of intense excitement, and that all India, from the Himalayas to the sea, was on the eve of a great rebellion.

Cawnpore, however, still remained quiet, the Rajah of Bithoor more friendly than ever.

There were also other disappointments in store for me that day. While the return of the captain brought me letters from friends at home, not one did I receive from father; and having now been in the East over a year and a half, it was time, I thought, he wrote me, if ever. The fact was there was not a thing said of him in the epistles I did get, further than that he was "nowadays up to his chin in Parliamentary affairs;" from which I could infer, if I liked, that he was by no means

taking my absence very seriously to heart; at any rate, not nearly enough so for me to entertain hopes yet, if ever, of securing his forgiveness.

Colonel Richerson was to relinquish his temporary office as commandant to Colonel Neill at once, and we were to start with the waning of day, so as to profit by the coolness of evening, that season of the year having now arrived when it was exceedingly hot. Much did each of us find to do, therefore, and alas, all too soon the moment for parting came.

This, indeed, was a touching scene, and one I have never forgotten.

With the exception of Zanee Kooran, Colonel Neill alone understood for what purpose we were departing. Accordingly his leave-taking of us was more than affectionate; it was with the utmost concern he bade us adieu and wished us success. Indeed, he grasped my hand so warmly and gave me such a hearty God-speed, I found the courage to tell him of my love for the princess; also, how matters stood between her and myself. I asked him to see she came to no harm from the Sepoys, and especially through Nana Sahib, during my absence.

"Certainly, Captain Clermonte," he replied, giving my hand a grip that made me wince; "I am only too glad you have spoken. The Governor-general, allow me to say, raised my expectations in you, and I find you are all, and more than he made you out to be; and the Begaum, of course, commands my highest esteem, and always will, God bless you both! Don't fear of her coming to harm while you are away, and I am here alive."

And when, a moment later, I informed him of what her servant, Pyu Yet, had overheard from the subahdars the day before, he thanked me with a significance of tone and a flash of the eye not to be mistaken; I felt then he would under no condition forget his promise nor neglect his duty.

Of the rest I need not speak—further than to say that when I took leave of Zanee Kooran, she, among other things, said:

“Dearest Henry, it is far from my wishes to give you cause for needless worry and alarm; but, believe me, I would readily yield up all my wealth could you abide here. Where you are going not only have the natives been robbed by Dalhousie, but of late there have been instances where caste has been snubbed—practically ignored; and that, you know, is an unpardonable offense in the eyes of my people. Therefore, you cannot be too careful, and never too prudent. Remember, the Sepoys, when once aroused, are perfectly heartless, and, what is worse, treacherous to the core. Should they rise at Cawnpore—as they have at Meerut—and obtain the upper hands there, they won’t be likely to show you Europeans the least mercy. And, Henry, Dhundoo Punt is naturally more cruel, crafty and perfidious than any of the others. Hence, beware of him particularly; if not for your sake, then for mine.

“Ah, I am so sorry he has his freedom; you—you don’t know, Henry, what a demon that man is. I haven’t told you all contained in his letter of last night. He—he sent me an offer of marriage. It was probably to get that money—the million of pounds. You know?”

“Yes, darling,” I whispered, kissing her tenderly, and resolving that if ever the opportunity did present itself, I would pay the Rajah of Bithoor back in his own coin, and that with double—aye! quadruple interest. I trembled, nevertheless, lest she should come to harm through him while I was away from Benares.

CHAPTER VI.

A SERIOUS STATE OF AFFAIRS.

WHEN Colonel and Mrs. Richerson, Captain and Mrs. Winslow, and I, attended by an escort of six Madras Fusileers, also five servants—two belonging to the captain, two to the colonel, and one to myself—sixteen of us in all—set out from Secrole that afternoon, it was with the expectation of reaching our destination in comparatively short order. We certainly saw no reason why we should not, for, while it was true that hardships lay before us, we hardly looked to encounter serious difficulties; and then, Cawnpore is only two hundred and fifty miles above Benares.

As it turned out, however, we were compelled through the heat and dryness of the season, and especially the unfriendliness of the natives, to stop, turn aside, retrace our steps and make such wide detours, often, and oftener, as we advanced, it took us not ten, nor twelve, nor even fifteen days, but nearly the whole of twenty-five to perform the journey!

Hence, the further we went, the more were Zanee Kooran's prognostications made manifest that a

grave situation confronted the Government. We were told by the friendly natives and the few Europeans we met and conferred with from time to time, that not only was the rebellion in Oude assuming larger and more appalling proportions, but at Meerut, Delhi, and many places of lesser importance, the most horrible scenes had already been, and were still being enacted.

Therefore, having to exercise, as we did, the utmost caution, the sharpest vigilance, lest our endeavors should come to naught, it was no surprise to me that we occasionally despaired of our mission's ever succeeding; I marveled, rather, that we bore up at all. You see, the only ray of hope we had during those darksome days of unexpected backsets and privations, trials and dangers, was the knowledge that Cawnpore still remained loyal, and in all probability would. What a faint ray of hope it was, however!

It consisted chiefly of how Sir Hugh Wheeler had lately received, at his special request, a force from Lucknow three hundred strong, one-sixth of whom were Europeans of the Thirty-second Regiment, and at the same time as many more men, with two guns, from the Rajah of Bithoor; in all, six hundred troops, with two guns.

This, it was said, would enable him, if necessary, to disarm the Sepoys at Cawnpore, who, though they had thus far evinced no sign of unfriendliness, could not but be more or less affected by so much uneasiness and disquietude as prevailed around them; but, best of all, it set at rest any fear of Nana Sahib's want of friendship and integrity for the future. For would he weaken his

own forces to strengthen those of an enemy whom he contemplated to crush? Certainly not. Originating with any one, such a thing would be absurd, and the Rajah, it must be remembered, was nobody's fool. Moreover, his doing as he had would tend to cow the native troops and preserve allegiance among them as nothing else could; which, too, if deeds of vengeance were meditated, would hardly be in keeping with them. It would then be desirable to inflame and excite the Sepoys to the furthest degree; not to awe and frighten them into abject submission.

All this failed to convince us, however; on the contrary, it alarmed us as not before had we been alarmed. It opened our eyes to the fact that Sir Hugh Wheeler considered his situation critical in the extreme; that he calculated Nana Sahib was aiming to strike him unawares and bring him to his mercy at a moment's notice. Aye, that he regarded his gift of three hundred men and two guns as a blind; those troops being without doubt his most trusty adherents, who would prevail upon Sir Hugh's Sepoys to rise to a man when the proper time should come.

But what if we could reach Cawnpore before any such calamity occurred? Might we not be able to give warning and perhaps save the garrison? Ah, there was our hope. Hence the renewed energy with which we breasted the future despite unknown roads, the adverse elements, the tortures inflicted upon us both night and day by myriads of stinging and biting insects, the antagonism of the natives, and above all the savage wild beasts and poisonous serpents of the jungles.

We were on the road, from the afternoon of Monday, May 11th, till the morning of Friday, June 5th, before we came in sight of the spires and minarets of our destination—a sight, alas! we never forgot.

Cawnpore, at the time of which I write, had been an important military station of Her Majesty's rule in India for the better part of a century, it having been selected for the occupancy of troops in 1777. It is on the River Ganges, of course, and a boat, following the stream, would cover a thousand miles in going from Calcutta thither.

As we found it, it was a large, straggling town, extending nearly five miles along the river, on a sandy plain, intensely hot and dusty, and possessing no fort or other buildings such as were provided for the safety of Europeans at Mirzapoor, Allahabad, and even smaller places along our route.

To be explicit, it chanced that we entered its environs first—the outskirts of the old town—that part occupied by the natives principally, and which, though large and mostly well-built, contained plenty of poverty and squalidness to offset the pomp and show.

Here we were urging our horses along, happy in the thought our journey was so nearly ended, and thankful enough we had pulled through it safe and sound—that, too, without having had our one faint hope blasted, when suddenly the colonel, who rode a little in advance of us, was accosted by a Hindu of the higher caste—an *Ameldar* (tax-collector)—who, having inquired of

him whither we were bound and for what purpose, said:

"Sahib, if I were you I would proceed no further with my friends; I would turn back at once."

"Turn back, nigger?" exclaimed Richerson. "What! Turn back when we've a passport to go where we please?"

"Yes, sahib; even so," answered the *Ameldar*, perfectly passive and humble. "As it is, it would be folly—madness for you to think of approaching the cantonments. You could not reach them, anyway, for the Sepoys have risen—are plundering and burning, and have been all the morning. If you don't believe it, look at the smoke." He pointed to a gray cloud in the sky at the westward, which we had failed to observe before. "Ah, sahib," he earnestly continued, "receive my advice as that of a friend, and go back—all of you. If you don't—if you keep on—out there, you will be murdered. I know you will. Even here you are not safe. The whole city is in an uproar, and you take your lives in your hands if you go a step further."

There was no mistaking his manner; it was too sincere for that. So this was our reward—for all those weary, weary days of travel, painstaking effort and uncertainty. This the conclusive proof—the clinching argument that few, if any, parts of India were exempt from the evils attending the spirit of disaffection. For now the Sepoys of Cawnpore had mutinied—those who had been pointed out to us stood in the greatest fear of so doing—it was only too apparent that the same would occur, not only at minor stations of ad-

joining provinces or districts, but at those all the way down the Ganges—at Allahabad, Mirzapoor, Benares even; in which case, the thought of the dangers that would then beset Zaneer Kooran nearly deprived me of my breath, my strength, my reason.

"When did you say the revolt broke out?" asked Richerson anxiously.

"It began, sahib, at midnight," the *Ameldar* answered.

"And General Wheeler—what of him?"

"He, sahib, had been expecting it for a number of days. And for that reason had collected his friends and the Europeans all into one place, round which intrenchments have been thrown up."

"What! Haven't the Sepoys attacked him yet?"

"No, and I don't think they will at present; leastwise I have been told that they are going to march away—to Nawabgunge, I believe it is."

"Ha! What is that for?"

"I don't know, sahib, unless"—and here the *Ameldar* lowered his voice, lest any of his people in the street there should hear him—"unless it is to meet Dhundoo Punt."

"Meet him?" repeated the colonel in well-feigned astonishment; "meet him? Why, I thought he was at Bithoor. Is he going to join the rebels then?"

"Ah, sahib, it appears he has been in league with them all along."

"But—great powers! Didn't he furnish General Wheeler three hundred men, with two guns?"

"That, sahib, was merely a blind. Those were his most faithful followers. Dhundoo Punt, let me tell you, would help no European; he hates them too much for that; he hates them as a Hindu never hated before. He has cause, too, for they have robbed him. No, he is not aiming to help them, but is rather seeking means of vengeance, and as your people here are first in his path—But pardon me, sahib; I can tell you no more. I dare not. What I have already said, if known to the Nana, might cost me my life. So, I can only repeat, do as I have told you; turn back—every one of you. Ride hard—fast. Perhaps you can then escape; may Brahma will it so anyway."

He had hardly finished speaking when, as if heard by the deity he had implored, savage cries rent the air—cries from the more densely populated part of the city; and a moment later these were accompanied by the rattle of musketry.

Thus it was made manifest that a reign of murder and rapine *had* begun; and so, it being apparently our only alternative, we turned our faces once more from Cawnpore, filled with feelings of dismay and regret such as we had at no time been filled with before.

"Gad, 'twould be a bitter dose, I say, if we weren't used to it," remarked Captain Winslow at length, as we rode along.

"Well, what's to be done about it?" I inquired dejectedly.

"Done?" echoed the colonel—and he spoke like a man suddenly roused from deep slumber; "done? Why, we'll take a little jaunt out into the country and so up toward the cantonments, to see

for ourselves whether we have been fooled or not."

"Then we had better make haste slowly," said Captain Winslow. "The heat promises to be everything it usually is, and already our horses are pretty well jaded."

"Yes, and we had also better make sure of our arms," I cautioned; "if the Sepoys have risen, there's no telling when we'll have occasion to use them."

"That is so," said the colonel in milder tones. "Men," turning to the Madras Fusileers, "keep your eyes open, and have your muskets ready. And *you, ladies*," he added with a smile, "be sure to stay inside the lines."

"Oh! as if we wouldn't—at this time of all times," answered his wife.

Once in the country again, we struck out to the southwest, and thence directly west, keeping all the time on the edge of the suburbs of the city, but avoiding as much as possible, every human being, every habitation. Here the rays of the sun beat down upon us with such cruel, relentless fury, they seemed to absorb the very moisture in our bodies.

At no time before had we tried to travel at mid-day; and now, not only was old Sol mounting to the zenith, but scarce a breath of air was stirring to make a breeze. The further we went the deeper we waded into this ocean of heat which, while it well-nigh suffocated us, caused our steeds to stagger beneath our weights until we feared lest they should drop upon the burning sand never to rise. Had it not been for the de-

licious shade of the mangoes and a few other trees, that manage to flourish somehow throughout the longest droughts, I believe they would have succumbed, and we with them.

Thanks to those oases, however, and the anxiety uppermost in our minds, we made that last painful detour of our journey without a mishap. Suspense, as it were, defied the sun; expectation survived the heat.

Seemingly, an eon of agony was endured by us ere we reached the eminence whence we could see the cantonments and the European quarters. This being a sort of a bluff or hillock, we were at last able to discern nearly everything—the series of cantonments, within the limits of which was a fine race-course, a broad, beautiful parade-ground which lay directly in front of us, the barracks and other military buildings, together with several hundred bungalows, which had been the homes of English officers. Alas, the majority of them were smouldering ruins. Among those which did remain intact, however, were some that for grandeur and architectural excellence, looked equal to any of the lordly residences I had in mind at home. Nor was this all. Flanking the parade-ground, and where there had been a long line of those palatial bungalows, was a grand promenade and fashionable drive, with well-kept orchards, groves, gardens and lawns.

The scene would have been to us one of enchantment, but for the work of the despoilers' hand, and also that parallel with the river, which flowed some distance beyond, we could see the Sepoys marching. They had formed in column by com-

panies and were fully accoutered, all their officers being mounted. We were informed later that everything in the equestrian line had been taken by them, even to the beasts of burden and the favorite riding horses of the English. Therefore, they made an imposing show—a goodly brigade, in fact, their number being not less than three thousand!

Having plundered and burned for twelve consecutive hours, they seemed to have tired somewhat of their work of senseless destruction, and were now setting out upon their march to Nawabgunge; that is, taking it for granted the *Ameldar* had told us the truth, which, as history will show, he did.

We had arrived at our point of observation just as the last of them were passing the parade-ground, and, not to mention the vigorous beating of drums and blaring of horns of various kinds, there rose from hundreds of brazen throats howlings and hootings—all given in the spirit of spite and derision. So powerful was the cadence and harmonious at times, even at that distance—a mile, nearly—we could catch strains of what was shouted, which, in substance, ran like this:

“Ho! Ho!—*Bandchoot* (a designation of the utmost contempt). We have loaded our guns for the last time, and we tore the fatted paper with gloves on our fingers! *Wallah, Wallah, Bandchoot!* We will obey you no more!”

These ~~epitaphs~~ were hurled at the central part of the parade-ground. At any rate, we took it they were, for there, from a tall flagstaff, waved the Union Jack gloriously, and, as always, with

epitaphs

undaunted pride; while beneath it a long line of intrenchments—in form very nearly a parallelogram—had been thrown up, and along this, at intervals, were embrasures, out of which peeped the mouths of cannon in grim silence. Back of the ordnance, as well as elsewhere inside the intrenchments, stood scores of our countrymen, every one of whom seemed intent on watching the receding Sepoys. Well they might be, for, though the fort looked formidable enough, it was really very weak.

Not only did it occupy level ground, but if it ever came to fighting, the earthworks alone must be relied upon, save where certain buildings had been brought into the line of defense. These, happily, were of stone, and made a very strong wall as far as they went; moreover, they were accessible to the defenders for whatever purpose desired. Other buildings of stone also stood inside the lines, as well as some wooden ones. Hence it was apparent that shelter enough, if not proper protection, existed for all who were huddled there.

“Well, I think the *Ameldar* told us the truth; I can’t see that any fighting has taken place,” I remarked.

“No,” said Captain Winslow. “No, the rascals are biding their time; they think General Wheeler is at their mercy, and—gad, not till the Rajah of Bithoor has come to direct them, will they attack him.”

“I believe it, Charlie,” assented the colonel; “yes, I believe you are right. And let the Nana come, who knows how many Hindus there may be? Great powers! perhaps thrice three thousand will

then assemble to take Sir Hugh. His means of defense, too, are so inadequate! Ah, Lill," giving his wife an affectionate glance, "I wish you and Mrs. Winslow were somewhere else now. It is going to be a pretty tough place, I am afraid, for you down there."

"You think of venturing in, then?"

"Yes, we must, Lill. Where else can we go? Moreover, it is evident that Sir Hugh will be besieged; and in that case he can't receive too much succor. To be sure, we don't know how well he is provisioned and the like; but now the way is open to us"—(scarcely a Sepoy was then in sight)—"it is our place to report to him for duty at once.

"But before doing so it strikes me that some one should be dispatched down the river with an account of affairs here. Don't you think so?" he inquired, turning to Charlie and me.

"Certainly, sir," replied the captain. "Telegraphic communications may have already been severed; if not—gad, then they soon will be."

"Yes, some one should go by all means," said I; "but who?"

"That is a problem," he mused. "Neither of you can very well be spared, and I of course must remain."

"Why not wait and consult with the general about it?" suggested his wife.

"I am afraid to do it; it is too risky. No messenger, you see, may have been sent yet, and if we waited till then the Sepoys might come back and make the starting of one impossible."

"Sahib, why couldn't you send us?" asked one of the Fusileers.

"*You?* Why, I hadn't thought of you, my fine fellow. Would you be willing to undertake it?" he asked, smiling.

"Yes, sahib, if you will let my comrades go with me."

This the colonel—and all of us, for the matter—received at first as a clever ruse on the Fusileer's part by which he and his friends could extract themselves from an unpleasant situation; but on coming to reason with the man a little, we changed our opinion. He pointed out to us how there were likely to be not only greater hardships, but more perils to encounter than when we came up the river, since in his belief the Sepoys had by this time mutinied pretty much all the way down the Ganges. Therefore, by sending them all, a message would stand a better chance of going through than if intrusted to one Fusileer, who might fall sick, get disabled or killed.

"Go, then," said the colonel, giving him a brief note, which he had written; "go, my good fellows, and may God help you to bring Sir Hugh assistance soon."

Ah, they *were* good fellows—those Madras Fusileers, and we felt we could trust them implicitly. Nevertheless, it was not without many misgivings that we saw them depart, for on the outcome of their undertaking our fate—aye, and that of hundreds of others—was perhaps hinged!

We watched them till out of sight, then resolutely started for the intrenchments, which we

reached in safety, and without meeting a single Sepoy.

Here General Wheeler came out himself to greet us, attended by some of his chief officers; among whom was the chaplain of the station—Mr. Moncrieff, a brave, true-hearted man, who not only, in theory, pointed the way to Heaven, but, in his daily life, most emphatically followed it;—also, Colonel Allan Scott, a gallant Highlander, and Colonel Arthur Banning, of the Heavy Artillery.

These officers assisted the ladies to dismount, and forthwith conducted them inside the fortifications, where they were cordially received by the women of the garrison.

But the colonel, Charlie and I had to wait outside and undergo a sort of an examination from Sir Hugh; for he was very anxious to know who we were, where from, and what our business was.

When the colonel had told him how we were after Nana Sahib, he said:

“Your bird has flown, sir. The Rajah left us some time ago. You will have to push on to Bithoor, if you want to find him; and that, you know, is eight miles above here.”

“Rather a risky undertaking—wouldn’t it be?” the colonel inquired, with a significant smile.

“Well, rather, I reckon.”

“Colonel, who sent you on this business, anyway?” he asked.

“It was a special order from the Governor-general—an order, sir, that could have been granted weeks ago. Certain information, you see, came to our notice last March. Well, on the strength of that my friend here, Captain W. A.

low, visited Canning and tried, personally, to convince him of the necessity of having Nana Sahib taken into custody without delay; he was even assisted by the regular commandant of Benares, Colonel Neill, who happened at that time to be in Calcutta. But His Lordship, little dreaming the case was so urgent, kept deferring it until——”

“Now it’s too late,” Sir Hugh cried bitterly. “Ah, colonel, I thought sometimes I’d arrest the Rajah myself; should probably have done so but for fear of the consequences. He is held in high esteem by the natives, you know, especially by those of this province; therefore, to have meddled with him might have resulted in a speedy rupture, and that I desired, if possible, to avoid. Of course, I made a mistake in letting him go. The revolt shows he exercised his influence over the Sepoys in every way to further his own ends; and those, gentlemen, are meant to terminate, not only in my overthrow, but the overthrow of British rule in India!

“Yes, I made a mistake in letting him go; taking him in hand couldn’t have made matters worse than they are, or will be. But the reports, you see, weren’t confirmed while he was here.”

“And what were they?” asked the colonel.

“Why, haven’t you heard? All the country hereabouts is in a state of open rebellion. It broke out at Meerut nearly a month ago, and the next day made its appearance in Delhi—you know that, do you not? Well, ever since it has been spreading, and I doubt now if there is a station between Lucknow and Allahabad not invested.

There is no telling how many people have perished, and the suffering endured will never be known. It will take a large force to crush the affair, and it may be years before order is again restored. Only day before yesterday a friendly native—a poor, half-starved wretch—reached here by way of Bithoor. He came purposely to warn us. Happily, however, our suspicions had already been awakened, and we were preparing the best that circumstances allowed to repel the Nana when he arrives.”

“Then you think he will attack you?”

“I know he will,” replied Sir Hugh. “Some of the Sepoys have been engaged all the morning down there”—he pointed to the eastward where we could discern many a dark form hurrying to and fro—“in removing shot and shell from the boats on the canal”—(a waterway communicating with the Ganges, and on which most of the transportation of goods was done)—“while others have broken into the armories and storehouses and taken thence every weapon to be found. Did you not see them as they marched off just now? Well, they have gone to meet the Nana, and by this time to-morrow, if not before, I expect them back here in overwhelming numbers; for with such a leader as the Rajah of Bithoor, thousands will flock to his standard.

“I say, colonel, I don’t see, for the life of me, how you and your friends escaped falling into their hands. You were very fortunate. The ladies—your wives—mustn’t think of leaving us under any condition.”

“No danger of it, general; we are here at Can-

ning's orders to report to you for duty," said the colonel, nodding to Charlie and me.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "I only wish, gentlemen, I could be assured of more such surprises. It is going to be a long time, I fear, before we receive much assistance."

"That's what *we* thought," said the colonel; "and for that reason we did all we could toward making your situation known. While on the hill there, yonder, we sent back our escort—six Madras Fusileers—with a report of it. We did it because they are brave, trusty fellows, and will be more likely than any Europeans would to take a message through."

"Indeed, you were very thoughtful," said Sir Hugh, warmly. "It is true that telegraphic communications haven't been cut yet; but they soon will be, and, furthermore, if those Fusileers get through in safety, they will know what the condition of the country is, and so prove of inestimable value, perhaps, in guiding here the more speedily a relief column."

"But why was it, gentlemen, knowing something, as you did, of the dangers into which you were venturing, that you brought your wives with you?"

"They accompanied us that we might travel the better," said the colonel, "that is, not be taken by the natives for spies, or have them suspect our mission. Of course, now the errand has failed, we are sorry that they came."

"Yes, it is too bad," the general soliloquized; "our quarters aren't very pleasant for ladies, and

—well, I fear they will be less so. However, now they are here, we must make the best of it.”

Then—

“But come in, gentlemen, and have dinner with me.”

Accordingly, he and the chaplain leading the way, we, attended by our servants, who led our horses, followed them inside the intrenchments.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SITUATION AS IT WAS.

WE were conducted by our illustrious guides to two massive stone buildings—what had been the barrack hospitals—which stood not far apart on the line of fortification. One of these was larger than the other, and into this we were escorted and served with a meal that tended to sharpen our appetites rather than appease our hunger, notwithstanding we endeavored earnestly to supplement the deficiency of solids by water, for which every condition was in our favor—the fact that we were spent with the fatigues of travel, and that the mercury stood high in the nineties.

General Wheeler and his officers did not want to be inhospitable to us, but the food supply had to be husbanded. While it was abundant enough at the present, there was no telling when more could be procured. Every mouthful obtainable had already been brought hither, and nine hundred human beings were inside the intrenchments to be fed!

So we were informed while dining.

Sir Hugh also told us that he had among these three hundred combatants, and possibly a few over.

"But," said he, with a sigh, "only two-thirds are legitimate fighting men; they are my officers and military staff. The rest are civilians—none of them to be relied upon very highly, though all will probably assist and do what they can, and many, doubtless, prove as brave and gallant as the best."

"And the other six hundred—what of them?" asked Colonel Richerson.

"Three hundred and sixty are women and children—families of the civilians and my officers. The remaining two hundred and forty are servants, invalids and the like—persons who cannot fight, but must be protected. But come, gentlemen; let's have a smoke."

Our frugal repast now being finished, he led us to another building, where he took us into his private office. Here he gave each of us an excellent cigar, and also unsealed for us—the colonel, Charlie and me, for Mr. Moncrieff was no longer present—a bottle of rare old wine.

These extras were uncalled for, since, under the circumstances it was military etiquette for us to be content with his inability to receive us more appropriately; but as we were officers sent by the Governor-general on a special mission, I suppose he felt he should let us understand that he wanted to be a liberal host.

Much satisfaction it must have afforded him, therefore, when he saw the pleasure we derived from the wine and those cigars, which soon made us feel like ourselves again, especially the colonel, who, with his habitual jovialness, related all that had taken place down the river relative to the

Sepoys and Nana Sahib; except, of course, that part played by the Begaum of Benares. Her name he would not reveal, though, apparently, no harm could have risen from it now.

Shortly afterwards, he showed us about the works; for, although his battery was composed of only eight guns, they were all twenty-four pounders, and not one could have been planted with better judgment for the defense of the place.

Even then parties of Sepoys, every man armed, and with cartridge-boxes full, we ascertained these facts by aid of the glass, could be seen prowling about among the ruined bungalows. Evidently they were only awaiting the return of the main body, and that with the Rajah of Bithoor at their head, when they would show us what they intended.

Not that afternoon did the main body appear, however, nor during the succeeding night. Hence for that much longer at least were we left in peace; and we availed ourselves of it by looking to several points where it was thought improvements could be made in the direction of strengthening the defenses.

At nightfall every one of us—men, women and children alike—gathered in the open spaces between the buildings, and, the chaplain leading, united in a fervent prayer to the throne of God; then we retired, for we knew that what sweet rest we could gain now would help us for the by-and-by.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SIEGE BEGINS.

SATURDAY, June 6th, 1857—a day to be memorable in English history evermore—opened, like the days had preceding it, intensely hot and sultry. Even at an early hour the mercury in the thermometer stood at ninety degrees, with scarce a breath of air stirring.

Breakfast over, I proceeded at once to my post. I had been assigned to service on the artillery; had been entrusted, in fact, with the management of one of the siege-guns—the long twenty-four pounders.

You see, during my days at Chatham I had distinguished myself a bit in gunnery, and, owing to this, the colonel had made General Wheeler believe that I understood exactly how to handle such a piece, though he must have known that I was at present considerably out of practice. However, I supposed he (the general) thought it would require only a few rounds for me to win back my skill; and, in truth, I was somewhat of this opinion myself; certainly so when I took into consideration the women and children, and others equally dependent, there, whom it was my duty to help protect.

To speak more plainly, I had also interests of my own at stake. Now that Zanee Kooran loved me, and I loved her, and we each understood the other, I naturally wished to get out of this death-trap alive—that is, if it could be done with honor.

Fortunately, I was pleased with the gun of which I had been given charge. She was as fine a piece of ordnance, for the kind, as I ever saw, and as she commanded an important position, one facing the parade-ground direct, I went over her again and again to familiarize myself with her workings and adjustments, since every machine, you know, has, the same as every person, its own peculiarities, its own individuality.

Indeed, it was thus I was engaged, when Colonel Banning came.

“If we are attacked,” said I, “I hope I shall be able to quit myself creditably. Let alone the many here to be defended, Sir Hugh has won a prominent place in my heart. He seems to be a splendid fellow; every inch a soldier, and every inch a good man.”

“You are right,” Banning replied warmly. “He is a good man—a grand man; brave, reliable and, what is more, true as steel. It is too bad the Nana went back on him.”

“Then you think he will attack us, do you?”

“Oh, yes; I am sure of it. In fact, what else could you expect from a man who has been robbed as he has? Yes, he will attack us all right enough; and, fool that I was! I now see, when it’s too late, that his feigned friendship for us was from the beginning a blind.”

"I have heard that he tried to make himself very agreeable here," said I.

"He did; and he succeeded so well, too, the most of us thought there was never a better fellow. You see, sir, he had English tastes; was a good shot, and could fairly hold his own at billiards; kept, also, a few horses for the race-course—he had some first-rate ones in his stables at Bithoor—was present at every ball and entertainment, and always willing to lend his aid and assistance to every gathering. His private band often played here on the promenade, and handsome presents of shawls, jewelry, and the like were frequently made by him to those whom he held in highest favor. He used to be a great pet among the ladies, for he never failed to show them every courtesy. He even went so far as to declare the one regret of his life was that his color and his religion prevented his entertaining the hope of obtaining an English wife. The hypocrite! To think how he held luncheon parties in his palace at Bithoor almost weekly, and at which a dozen or more of us officers would be present! Why, sir, in all India—Hark! What is that I hear?"

A sound like the rushing of a distant wind through leafless boughs, smote our ears, and presently we could distinguish music—chiefly a great beating of drums and blaring of horns.

"Ha! The Sepoys are coming," shouted my companion. "The Sepoys are coming!"

He was right. About a quarter past nine—fifteen minutes later—the head of the column hove in sight among the upper part of the cantonments. First came a division of cavalry, and then a regi-

ment of foot, both gay in scarlet uniforms and with gorgeous banners.

These were followed by what appeared to be a section of mounted officers, who rode a little in advance of a magnificent, full-grown elephant, richly caparisoned, and bearing upon its back a pavilion of regal splendor, in which reclined, on downy cushions, a single individual, whose showy garb, even at that distance, it could be seen (by aid of the glass), was resplendent with gold and precious stones.

Up to my side strode General Wheeler with his largest glass, and leveled it.

One look was enough for him; a deep groan bursting from his lips, he turned to Colonel Banning, and said:

"It's just as I expected, colonel; Nana Sahib leads them. Great God! Why was it we did not arrest him when the chance was ours? Perhaps, then, the agony of this hour might have been spared us."

"Well, general, it's too late to think of that now. The present confronts us, and we must make the best of it," Banning firmly replied.

"True, colonel, true; but how much that will amount to, heaven only knows."

Then, facing about, he straightened himself before his officers, who had congregated at this point to the number of more than two score, to watch, the same as had a larger assemblage of women and children, back of them still, the Sepoy host. An honest light shone in his clear eyes, and his handsome face, which had suddenly grown firm and defiant in expression, looked al-

most as grand as that of an archangel. Indeed, I shall never forget him as he stood there, his clenched hand smote upon his bosom, as he said, in a voice scarcely raised above a whisper:

"Comrades! We are English officers and gentlemen! If we must fall in the coming struggle, let our deeds, while life is ours, be such as will make our dear country proud of us, and not—not defile us in the sight of God."

A hearty *amen* burst from every lip; and I know, for my part, that I experienced a feeling of resolve, of resignation even, such as I had never felt before, and which can only be born of despair, as we then united in a fervent and fraternal grasping of hands, each of us with the other.

Giving the glass through which I had been looking to Colonel Banning, I said:

"Those fellows nearest the Rajah appear to hold high rank. Do you know who they are?"

"I do not," he replied; "the most of them, in fact, are strangers to me."

"Yes, they are strangers, as also is a large part of the foot further in the rear," said Colonel Scott, who was now using the glass; "they are probably men of the Nana's own force. He maintains quite a military establishment at Bithoor, you know?"

That the Sepoys of the original Cawnpore force had been augmented considerably, was manifested by similar expressions of various officers who took the glass, in their turns, and looked. Those best acquainted with the mutineers thought there were from six to eight hundred strangers in the column moving upon us!

For not once did the Sepoys stay or alter their course, until they had arrived at the extreme upper end of the broad space generally denominated the parade-ground, between which and the intrenchments only a mile and a half intervened; then a bugle sounded, the music ceased, and the gay column came to a halt.

Forthwith two horsemen rode from the front back to the elephant, and there appeared to receive instructions from the Nana. Five minutes were consumed in this manner, when one of the horsemen who had ridden back dashed forward with a white flag waving above his head.

"Aha! They send us a stranger, do they?" cried Colonel Banning.

"Certainly," replied Colonel Scott. "What else can they do? Evidently no officer of the station dares trust himself within reach of his old commander now," he added contemptuously.

In the meantime the Hindu—probably an officer of the Rajah's household—rode up to within hailing distance of the intrenchments, and demanded to speak with the Maha-Sahib, General Wheeler.

"Well, I am he," said Sir Hugh, stepping boldly forward.

The message that the Hindu delivered was a grandiloquent, high-sounding, tremendous affair, setting forth how if the Great Sahib named General Wheeler would immediately and unconditionally surrender the town of Cawnpore, together with all fortified places therein, to the High and Mighty the Maha-Rajah called Nana Sahib, to be by him possessed and holden henceforth; the

said surrender to include every species of property, save only the clothing belonging to each individual, all jewels worn upon the person, and one sword and one pistol to each man, with necessary food; all else to be given up:—if the said General Wheeler would agree to this, why, he should be allowed to pass out in safety from the town and have a safe conduct as far as Allahabad,—he and every European now with him, with this exception: Those three officers who had yesterday arrived from down the river—namely, Colonel Howard Richerson, Captain Charles Winslow and Captain Henry Clermonte—should, it was the Great Rajah's pleasure, abide with him for a while and partake of his hospitality.

"Ha! Then he did have a hand, through his emissaries, in intercepting those letters, when I was absent from Benares," said Captain Winslow to Colonel Richerson, both of whom stood beside me.

"Yes, and no doubt knows all about our plans concerning himself," I grumbled bitterly, recalling with horror the warning words of Zanee Kooran when we parted.

"Well, we aren't in his clutches yet, thank fortune! Let's content ourselves with that," said the colonel, quietly.

Sir Hugh's response to the Nana's messenger was short and crisp.

"Go tell your master," said he, in his most pompous style, "that he is a villain, a traitor, and a false man. Aye, tell him that to save my life I wouldn't so belittle myself as to entertain from him for a moment a proposition of his making. If he

wants the property now **in my** keeping, he must come and take it. He will find me here!’

To this the messenger made no reply; he did not even show any impatience or surprise at it. He merely bowed, then wheeled his horse about and spurred away.

“Now we shall soon know what to expect,” said Sir Hugh.

He was right. In a short time the Sepoy column was again in motion, and shortly after we caught sight of a train of heavy artillery. There were twelve twenty-four pounders—regular siege pieces—that we counted, drawn by oxen. These were followed by a number of powder wagons, and these, in turn, by heavy carts evidently bearing shot and shell—all drawn, as were the guns, by oxen.

It is not my purpose to make too long a story of the investment which followed, though it is doubtful if the pen of any man can do justice to its horrors—the uncertainties and fears that assailed us, and which were all too soon realized in their most awful reality. Death that leered at us and then came to us in a dozen different forms; the sufferings and hardships endured by us who were spared the longest, and the heroism displayed alike by men, women and children, of which no greater heroism perhaps was ever displayed by human beings. Volumes might be written on it, and then not one-half be told, and never could.

Suffice it to say, therefore, that Nana Sahib, having once more sent in a demand for instant surrender, which was as peremptorily refused as the first one had been, opened fire upon us.

Of course, when we perceived that a bombard-

ment was inevitable, we did all we could to lessen our danger, by harassing the Sepoys as much as possible; we straightway began shooting at them with two of our long twenty-four pounders, one of which being the piece I had charge of, I had a fair chance to obtain some practice preparatory to more important work to come. But alas! it was energy practically wasted.

Availing themselves of ground already gained, they, despite our best efforts, planted their artillery to advantage and with excellent judgment; and added to this, it was made manifest, as soon as they were in action, that they had as expert gunners among them as were any of us Europeans. Not only was their ordnance handled skillfully, but the guns were fired with precision and deadly aim; so much so, in fact, that within an hour after their batteries had opened fire, the women and children all came down from the upper stories of the various buildings, forced to seek shelter behind something cannon-balls could not penetrate.

Now it was that a difficulty which had been too little thought of by Sir Hugh and his men when they were fortifying, unfolded itself to us in all its horrors. The only well from which we could draw water for drinking and cooking purposes, was in one of the most exposed parts of an open space within the lines, and separated from without only by the low earth-work, over which any good man could almost have leaped.

The Sepoys quickly discovered this, and, as might be expected, concentrated their fire upon it without delay. Hence, not only did it become impossible for any of us to go near the well by daylight, but

the continuous battering and plowing of the solid shot about its mouth, threatened to destroy it by filling it up. Had this occurred, it would, of course, have been fatal for us. No other source whence fresh water could be procured existed—not within the lines.

Happily, for us, however, the well was not destroyed; and those who took the matter in charge, resolved that after that day sufficient water should be drawn at night to last us through the fifteen or sixteen hours of succeeding daylight.

Such was our plight on the night of June 6th, when as yet the siege had barely begun!

CHAPTER IX.

THE FATE OF FUTTEGHUR.

THE next morning—the Sabbath morning—Chaplain Moncrieff, regardless of danger to himself, went around among us giving us such words of cheer as he could command.

Cannon-balls were still crashing into our midst, often creating dire havoc, while bullets were also whistling over our heads, due to some of the Sepoys having under cover of darkness dug rifle-pits within range, and now that daylight had come, were thence trying to pick us off. These caused us to tremble for his safety, and we urged him to betake himself away from danger. But not for a moment would he listen to us. No, he had *his* duty to perform, he said, and he would show us he did not fear to do it. The example he set us was not in vain; at any rate, we shelled those rifle-pits so persistently we made the mutineers abandon them, and presently silenced one of their twenty-four pounders.

But of what avail were such trifling successes? The bombardment went on, just the same, and that, alas! with daily increasing fury. True, we might be able to stop the Sepoys' coming inside the intrenchments, but we could not prevent the suffer-

ings they inflicted upon us, and these became frightful beyond description.

Almost at the outset were the few horses and cattle we had shot down, and there being no chance for us to dispose of them, the carcasses had to lie, for the most part, where they fell, and to fester in the broiling sun. As a consequence, an awful effluvia arose, and delicate women, weak men, and feeble children, overcome by this, and also from being too closely huddled together in the ill-ventilated rooms of buildings riddled through and through with shot and shell, and from having to do without those luxuries which alone make life endurable to Europeans in Indian cities on the plains during the heats of summer, were soon falling sick and dying at an alarming rate. Added to this, the Sepoys on the fifth day of the siege took to firing red-hot shot; and two days later, while a strong wind was blowing, they thus succeeded in setting on fire some of the wooden structures in which our sick and wounded were confined, with the result that nearly fifty of these were burned—aye! cremated alive—before we could rescue them.

Of course, it was out of the question for the non-combatants who were left to stay in the buildings which remained after that. But alas! the only shelter we could provide for them was by digging holes in the ground—chiefly under the banks of the intrenchments—and setting boards, boxes and the like over these. Therefore, was it any wonder that at the end of the first week we found over a hundred of us had fallen, the majority of whom were weak men, women and children? Ah! the burrows we had constructed might shield them to some ex-

tent from the scorching rays of the sun, and perhaps exclude from their aching eyes the sight of the fiery cannon-balls which tore over us and rolled beyond, ever crackling and snarling like maddened dogs; but nothing could stop the noise nor stay the stench arising from the broad charnel-house, and which was far more horrible and fatal to endure than the incessant storm of iron showered upon us from the enemy's guns.

It was marvelous how any of us managed to keep alive during this reign of terror and monstrosity. Owing to our cramped condition within the lines, and the fact that none of us could go outside to remain for any length of time, so vigilant were the Sepoys, and from whom no armistice was obtainable, opportunities were not given us even to bury our dead. Accordingly, we had to resort to the next best thing, namely, a very deep well, dug, nobody there knew when, which was, happily, accessible to us inside the intrenchments.

Unlike the one we drew water from, it was shut in by a mass of *débris*, left in the demolition of an old stone structure, and which Sir Hugh's men had not cared to remove when they were fortifying. Much too shallow and hard was the water in it to be of use to us, however; it seemed to be impregnated with lime or some mineral, which rendered it anything but palatable; and so, a better sarcophagus not existing, it became customary with us, when night had fallen, to gather up reverently the bodies of the dead and deposit them in this old well, thinking if we lived to survive the horror-laden time, we would take up the forms and give them different burial.

Truly, we were learning what war is like—to know how it feels to be imprisoned, as within the walls of Dartmoor, only here our lives were in danger every minute; doubly so, since scurvy, fever, sunstroke and cholera were causing such mortality among us. As our numbers dwindled day by day, those of Nana Sahib were augmented. From far and near the rebellious natives flocked to his standard, until he had us surrounded—practically cut off from every hope of succor—with fully twelve thousand men, and his batteries, moreover, had been strengthened with a number of heavy guns.

Remarkable as it may seem, though, we did not yet despair. In defending our lives and property, we were fighting with just cause, and borne up by the thought of this, we became lion-hearted. We could die, but we would not yield. This much was made manifest to the Nana, in that, notwithstanding he had frequently sent in to demand a surrender, promising, each time, he would permit the whole garrison—except, of course, Colonel Richerson, Captain Winslow and myself—to depart in safety, thus far his proposals had been peremptorily refused by Sir Hugh.

Once only had he summoned a council of his chief officers and to them put the question:

“Shall we surrender the trust which our Government has given us to these creatures, and above all deliver up three brave officers sent here by Lord Canning to frustrate this demon’s designs, that the rest of us may go free?”

And the answer, I afterwards learned, had been:

“No! Never!”

Ah! We soon had cause to rejoice over this deci-

sion, albeit it was offset by an anxiety which weighed upon our hearts like lead. How so? Because on the night of the 14th—the day after the cremation of so many of our sick and wounded, Colonel Richerson, while on a round of inspection for Sir Hugh, detected in the darkness, lighted up only by the occasional flash of our guns, or by the bursting of the enemy's shells, the form of a man who was laboriously worming himself along on his hands and knees just outside the intrenchments.

No response did he make, however, when challenged by the colonel. Therefore, thinking that he was a spy, and was perhaps trying to get away, my friend leaped over the earth-work, seized him and dragged him back with him, single-handed, to find he had captured one of the most pitiful-looking wretches we had ever seen. He was not a Hindu, but a European; and he was so far gone he could scarcely whisper, much less speak a word. Indeed, not until we had refreshed him with wine were we able to learn who he was; then, with painful exertions, he told us that he was, like ourselves, one of Her Majesty's soldiers—a sergeant named John Brenton.

He had come from Futteghur, he said, the military cantonment of Furruckabad, a town about three miles to the westward of it, and on the opposite or left bank of the Ganges. Here he was stationed when the mutiny broke out. The cantonment had contained a small fort, and when it was seen the Sepoys were no longer to be relied upon, Colonel George Acklan Smith, the commander of the Tenth Regiment of Native Infantry, had shut himself up, with his officers, in this, and he (Bren-

ton) had constituted one of the number; the Christian people of the place had also come to them for protection, and in all one hundred and fifty persons had collected there.

Only one-fourth of them were men capable of bearing arms, however, and withal they were poorly provisioned, as well as sadly lacking in guns and ammunition. Could they hope, then, to hold out against the Sepoys? Aye, they had, nevertheless, meeting their onslaughts, when besieged by them in overwhelming numbers, with stubborn resistance. Day and night they had toiled, weary but undaunted, in the batteries, and it was not uncommon for them to be forced to use strange ammunition with their artillery, while many indeed were the rebels who fell beneath the fire of their rifles.

Colonel Smith was a noted marksman, and he had picked off the mutineers with such an amount of skill it would have done credit to the "prize-men" of Wimbledon. The chaplain, too, Mr. Frederick Fisher, had alternated the duties of a soldier with those of a Christian minister. Having preached on the text, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee," he went out and faced the enemy with the bravery of a veteran.

Thus animated, the little garrison had displayed remarkable fortitude, and made a gallant defense. Even some of the women took part in the fighting, and one—the widow of a man attached to the Clothing Agency, who had been shot dead at his post—set an example for the others which, no doubt, helped them to bear up more bravely. Rather than sitting down to weep, and to pray

for the men who were still left alive to defend them, she had gone out and, with rifle in hand, posted herself in one of the bastions, "Whence," said Brenton, "I saw her shoot down many of the Sepoys."

But, though they had defended themselves so heroically against desperate odds—aye! though the chaplain, in one of the attacks, had killed the rebels' leader with his own hand, causing them to fall back discomfited, all too soon had their ammunition failed them, and it was found they could no longer remain in the fort, since there was no hope of succor from without.

Accordingly, one dark night, when the Sepoys were quiet, three boats had borne away the Christian people from Futteghur. A hundred souls—the other third were dead by this time—had crowded, with what baggage they could collect, and that with many of them sick and wounded, into these three boats, and drifted out, they scarcely knew whither.

With all their drawbacks, they had succeeded in getting nicely started down the Ganges, and were congratulating themselves that they would escape from the enemy, after all, when, one of the boats ran upon a shoal. Therefore, to get it floated again necessitated hard work and a great delay, and more noise made than should have been, which aroused the villagers nearby, who consequently poured out in scores and began firing upon them. This, in turn, produced extreme terror among the women and children, and the probability was that every one of the unprotected occupants in that boat would have perished on the spot, had not a

squad of seven brave officers, trusting to their strong arms and good cause, charged a crowd of some hundreds of the natives and succeeded in putting them to flight. The poor creatures—what were left of them—then crowded into the other two boats, notwithstanding their being already overladen, and in an incredibly short time the voyage down the river was resumed.

Only for a short distance, however. The natives now followed them in crafts of various kind, while more lined the banks of the river, and in the midst of the confusion which prevailed, another boat was grounded. The result was, a terribly brutal massacre ensued. Seeing it was death to stay in the boat, all had jumped from it who were able to, so that those not shot or cut down by the mutineers, were drowned.

As far as Brenton knew, only the chaplain had come out alive.

He was half-crazed with grief, for, like many another man during those darksome days in India, he had had a family, and up to the time of the second boat's grounding, his wife and child, whom he greatly loved, had been with him; but now he was *alone*. Being asked where they were, he had tearfully answered:

"God help them! Both were drowned in my arms."

Then he had explained how, on the boat's being surrounded, he had caught up little Phil, and, with his wife, leaped into the water. The current had been too strong for Mrs. Fisher, however; she was carried almost immediately off her feet by it, and, in his efforts to save her, he had lost

both her and the boy. After that the natives had closed in, and he had had all he could do to save himself.

As to the third boat, it had drifted on without further molestation, and its occupants were working desperately to reach Cawnpore—a haven, they supposed, of safety and rest, when three days previous to the present time—that is, on Thursday afternoon—they were suddenly discovered and set upon by a detachment of Nana Sahib's forces. Some were shot down at once by the brutes from the shore, and in the height of the terror and confusion, Brenton had dropped overboard; and, being fortunately an expert swimmer, he swam under water from the boat to a narrow neck of land where a thick growth of tangled wildwood afforded him a complete cover.

Here he had lain until he had seen the last of his companions, who were left alive, seized and carried off by the Sepoys. Then he had calculated, as near as he could, the proper course, and set out on foot for Cawnpore. He had not dared travel by daylight, but he had been successful in hitting the right direction, also in escaping detection and capture by the rebels, and so had reached us at length in the sad plight we found him.

And now he came to the most significant part of his story—at least, the most significant to us. During his tramp from the river, he was befriended on the second day by a native, who gave him information concerning his friends. They had been dragged, the native told him, into the presence of Nana Sahib, before whom all the men

were butchered, and the women and children then thrown into prison!

"Oh, you don't know," said the poor man, feebly, when he had swallowed food and taken a little more wine; "you don't know, shut up here, what that wretch is doing. Why, before his troops fired upon us in the boat, they jeered at us and told us that the Great Rajah had sworn, by a most solemn oath, to put every Feringhee he can lay hands upon to death! I believe he has; for in coming from the point of my landing, on the river's bank, to this place, I saw and counted no less than a dozen different bodies—mostly Europeans, apparently striving to reach these works—who had in all probability been killed by his demon butchers!"

Sir Hugh and the rest of us listened, dumb-founded. We could hardly believe that this was the clemency of the Rajah of Bithoor; and yet the appearance, the sincerity of the ragged, half-starved creature before us made us feel it must be true.

What! surrender to the Nana? No, never! Better by far to be shot down at our post and overcome by disease, than place ourselves, voluntarily, in the hands of such a monster.

"Ah," thought I, "what would Zanee Kooran say if she knew of the plight we are in now?" Poor girl! how it would have pained her. I was thankful, indeed, she was in ignorance of it.

But, again, what if Sir Hugh should be *compelled* to surrender? If the Rajah of Bithoor was such a demon as Sergeant Brenton made him out to be, might not the fate of Cawnpore then be a duplicate of the fate of Futteghur?

Alas! it was becoming more and more apparent that if succor did not reach us soon, we could prepare to expect the worst. Already woe and wretchedness hemmed us in on every side; not only was disease cutting us down, but gaunt famine began to loom up before us; our food supply was dwindling!

Moreover, we had now only two hundred men capable of bearing arms, and eight cannons, to defend a long line of earth-work; while against us were arrayed from twelve to thirteen thousand strong, cruel, bloodthirsty Hindus, with fifty large guns, hurling shot and shell incessantly.

Such was our situation, when, on the morning of the 17th, we discovered at break of day that the enemy had made during the night an important advance upon our works which, if not promptly repulsed, must be fatal.

Sir Hugh was equal to the occasion, however. At once he summoned to his aid his chief officers and, having conferred with them, surprised me by approaching Colonel Richerson, with whom I stood conversing. He took both my friend's hands in his and, looking him in the eye, asked:

"My dear colonel, are you willing to give yourself up to the task of saving the garrison for another day?"

"That, general, depends on what it is. Have you any particular plan in view?"

"I have, sir. My idea is to send out a force to scatter those audacious Sepoys, and I want you to lead the attack. Can you do it?"

For a moment I thought I saw my friend's face

blanch; but when I looked again it was set with indomitable will, and he was saying:

“Let me bid my wife farewell, general, and I am ready!”

Accordingly we began to make preparations to drive the mutineers back; and, in truth, it was time.

CHAPTER X.

A BIT OF BRITISH VALOR.

ON that Wednesday morning one of Sir Hugh's officers and I were busily engaged, at daybreak, in obtaining from the well the last turn of water we should be able to get before night had again spread her friendly mantle over our track. For two long hours we had been at the wearisome work, alternately with others, in utter darkness; but now the gloom had slightly lifted, and as we began to draw the last measure outlines of nearby objects could be indistinctly seen.

At length our vessels were full. My companion was drinking from a cup, and I had just put the lifting yoke on my shoulders, when the monotonous roar of the enemy's heavy guns was suddenly and clearly interrupted by the sharp report of a rifle close at hand; and in the same instant I felt that the wooden yoke on my shoulder was struck—aye, knew the splinters were flying from it.

My companion had caught the direction whence the shot came, and on peering intently where he pointed, I, too, was able to see, by the gradually increasing light, that the Sepoys had taken possession of a new position; in other words, ad-

vanced up close to that angle of the intrenchments where the well was, and there erected a platform, on which were already mounted five twenty-four pounder carronades. I saw, further, that two score, or more, of the swarthy savages were engaged in piling up case-shot, shrapnel and canister, with a few stands of grape, for use in guns.

Horror, dismay, despair, seized me at the sight. From that point the bloodthirsty crew could hurl a sweeping storm of sure death into every part of the enclosure. They could make it impossible for us to obtain any more water from the well, even at night; could direct grape and canister into the sheltered places we had dug in the earth; in short, effectually sweep every avenue of communication within the intrenchments.

Oh, something must be done, and done at once!

Accordingly, leaving the vessels of water where they were, my companion and I rushed off to inform Sir Hugh.

No doubt the general would himself have led the attack (such was his nature) had he not been suffering from a severe vertigo, brought on by overwork.

Having taken leave of his wife—by the way, she and Verona had thus far preserved their health admirably and were serving splendidly in administering relief, hope and consolation to the sick, disabled and dying—the colonel soon appeared, armed, equipped and fully prepared for the desperate venture.

Sir Hugh, in the meantime, had caused the able men of the garrison to turn out, and drawn them up in line for him to address.

"They will follow you better," he had told him, "if they have your inspiration from the start."

Accordingly, at a signal from the baronet, Richerson now addressed the men. He pointed to the work which the enemy had erected, and was about to point out its dangers, when a sharp, quick cry of alarm from a look-out caused him, not only, but all of us, to turn and gaze at the work in question.

A crew of between three and four hundred Sepoys had gathered around the new battery, and I looked just in time to see a dark-skinned gunner apply a lighted match to the priming of one of the guns. Forthwith leaped a stream of flame and smoke, and lo! a storm of shrapnel swept over the well, tearing through a small hut beyond, and killing three persons—a woman and two children—who had been on their way out of curiosity to witness the scene over which my friend was presiding.

Thus it was made manifest that if the enemy were allowed to retain the position even an hour longer, they would be able to sweep every yard of the inclosure with their murderous fire. What further eloquence than that shot, therefore, was needed? Aye, none! At any rate, the colonel thought so, for, with the dying away of the boom of the gun, he shouted:

"Ho! My men! We must drive those demons away from that place! I want fifty strong, able men to go with me. Who shall they be? Two steps to the front, please, you who will go with me."

Without a word—in stern silence, even, the whole line advanced two paces.

"Good!" said the colonel, smiling and bowing as complacently as if he had just been complimented by a whole drawing-room of people; "only I can't take all of you. Fifty men are all I want. So now, that there may be no complaint, or hard feelings, I will proceed by taking every other one of you just as you stand."

To this the men made no objections; and when the devoted band was ready, the colonel walked up and down the line, making sure that every rifle was properly charged, and that the bayonets were securely fixed. He looked to the latter particularly, for that was the weapon to be relied upon. The Hindus were sorely afraid of it; indeed, they would sooner face a battery, loaded to the very muzzles, than be called upon to withstand a bayonet charge.

The first golden beam of the morning's sun had illumed the spire of a distant mosque, causing it to gleam like a point of dazzling light in the upper air, when the colonel finished his work of inspection, and turning to me, said:

"Now, Henry, if there should be any chance for it, give us the aid of your very best gunnery."

"God grant I may, old friend," I answered; and fearing to say more, I betook myself to the gun of which I had been given charge.

Meanwhile, the colonel unsheathed his sword and gave the order to advance. The force was to leave the intrenchments in two close files, and, at the proper place, come to a company front, fire and charge.

Hence, ere I hardly knew it, the men went over their own works at a bound; and as they came to

the point where they were to make their onset, I judged there were at least four hundred Hindus gathered about the battery.

"Halt! Ready! Fire!" rang out the colonel's voice; and on the double-quick every man came into position and executed the orders—with such precision, too, that their muskets flashed almost as one piece.

"Now! Forward! Charge!" and away they dashed under the smoke of their own rifles, the colonel at the head of the line.

A gaudily uniformed Khattriya, or chief warrior, accompanied by one of the jemidars of the mutineers, ran out, apparently to learn what was up. With a loud shout to his men, the colonel leaped forward, however, and, before I could credit the sight, and certainly before the twain could have realized their danger, he had cut them both down. And though others of the Sepoys immediately confronted him, they, too, fell or slunk back out of his way. Indeed, a strength superhuman seemed to nerve his arm, and, owing to his courage, and also excellent skill with the sword, the miserable creatures before him had hardly the power then to do him personal harm.

Every man of his command likewise sprang to the work with desperate energy, and, seemingly, without a thought of fear. The terrible bayonets, therefore, struck down everything before them; and so suddenly, and so furiously, had the attack been made, the Sepoys were confused and demoralized from the very start. True, they fired some shots; but, fortunately for the colonel and his men, not one of them had a bayonet fixed, nor

was the order to that effect given. In fine, the colonel had cut down the chief men of the force at the first onset, and after that no one was left who seemed to feel that he had authority to command.

I had always heard it said that nothing can inspire soldiers like success; and on the present occasion I was made to believe it, for that achieved by the colonel and his men filled them with an ardor beyond control. They were nearly all officers, of different grades, who were inured to danger and difficulty; and, together with our cheers of approval from the fortress, and the fact that they were fighting for salvation, they now plunged into the fray with absolute fury.

The colonel was still the central figure of the engagement. I stood where I could watch his every movement, and three different times saw him spring to where one or more of his men had been set upon by a multitude, and in every case clear his way to their side, and bring them safely out. As a matter of fact, his trenchant blade was an avenging weapon; wherever it fell, it sent a life to account for the dread sin of treason and mutiny. And oh, to my infinite relief, the scores of efforts directed against him were turned harmlessly away.

"Now's your time, Henry; quick, I say, or—gad, the chance'll be lost!" cried Captain Winslow, who stood, watching, at my side.

He referred to a body of the Sepoys who had massed out in the open parade-ground, a little beyond the colonel and his men, and against whom they were at last making a stand. They were all

in a straight line from me, and afforded opportunities for an excellent shot; but to reach them I must, nevertheless, fire directly over the colonel and his men. Could I do it? Ah, it would be a hazardous undertaking, indeed. I knew the exact amount of powder my gun contained—the exact amount of force it would expend; but the exact distance between me and the Sepoys I must guess at, elevate the piece accordingly, and then trust to luck and—to the God of battles.

However, seeing that the colonel and his men were becoming weary, and that the Hindus were, on the other hand, pressing them hard, I sprang to my work without a moment's hesitation. Estimating the distance as nearly as I could with my eye, I brought the gun into position, sighted it, and pulled the lanyard.

My activity was succeeded by a feeling of sickening dread, almost revulsion. There was only one thought in my mind, and that was, suppose I had elevated the gun too much? My target consisted of two parts, remember, and it was the upper, or further, one that I wished to hit. If the shell was cut too sharp an angle, however, it would drop on the lower, or nearer, half.

Something had happened. I was conscious of tremendous shouting. Then came the blast of a bugle.

"What is it?" I asked, as Captain Winslow wrung my hand and babbled a lot of words in my ear I failed to understand.

"What is it?" he repeated; "what is it? Gad! You hit the rascals plumb in the centre, and those left alive are now fleeing for their lives."

"But what of the colonel and his men?" I inquired, still failing to comprehend the lucky shot I had made.

"Why, gad, they're coming back. The general has recalled them. Didn't you hear the bugle?"

He was right. The fight was over; the Sepoys were gone, and our men returning.

Now, incredible though it may appear, Richer-son brought back into the lines the fifty men whom he, less than three-quarters of an hour before, had led out, every one of them being alive and able to walk.

On the other hand, the dead of the Sepoys lay in scores. From the moment of the first impact up to that period when my shot had dealt the final blow, they had made a very weak resistance. They had gathered there, you see, for the purpose of playing with the great guns. They had come up to load, and fire, and sweep the intrenchments with a death-dealing storm of grape, canister and shrapnel, never dreaming that we would dare come out of our works and attack them. Thus, when we did attack, they had at once become demoralized, and, for the most part, utter cowards. Indeed, as near as we could reckon, one hundred and fifty of them had been killed outright.

Meanwhile, to complete the victory, Sir Hugh sent out a gang of armorers to spike the guns which had been captured; for we could not think of moving them, neither had we the means of handling them, were they inside the lines.

The platform was then demolished; and when the armorers and workmen were once more inside the intrenchments, all listened to an eloquent

speech of hearty thanks from Sir Hugh, together with shouts of joy and gratitude from every one else.

"Great powers, Henry, but you *can* shoot," exclaimed the colonel admiringly, when Captain Winslow and I were finally allowed to carry him off between us in quest of food.

"Shoot? Gad, I should say so," ejaculated the captain. "Why, colonel, he has nerves of steel."

"Well, I believe it," said the colonel; "yes, I do, for I tell you it takes something besides flesh and blood to graze your best friend's head with a hissing shell, and so knock away the victory for which he's striven with might and main. Great powers! you can't conceive how disappointing it is." Whereupon we all laughed, and gave one another a playful pull, like a trio of frolicsome school-boys.

The next minute Lillian was in the arms of her husband, looking up into the face of a hero—one who had come forth from the storm of death unharmed, yet, withal, had offered his life, freely and nobly, for the good of the garrison. Ah, it was a proud moment for her.

CHAPTER XI.

AN EFFORT GRIM AND GRAND.

To pass hurriedly over a horrible period—a period fraught with deaths by disease, and deaths from the balls of the enemy—the evening of Monday, June 22nd, found us driven to sore straits. Every building within the lines was utterly shattered, and no shelter existed there further than that afforded by the caves we had dug in the earth. Two hundred men were all Sir Hugh had, who could fire a musket or work a gun; and these, perforce, must defend a long line of fortifications, so dismantled now that a child might have climbed over them at almost any point. On the other hand, there were arrayed against us by this time no less than thirteen thousand Hindus, well armed and provisioned, and possessing plenty of artillery and ammunition!

Why did they not carry the intrenchments by direct assault? Because their leader, Nana Sahib was most emphatically a coward.

Deprived as they were of their European officers, they must act, forsooth, in herds to accomplish anything at all, and if a panic once did set in with

them, common sense was generally gone. Added to this, they had no more moral courage than a pack of jackals. They might, it was true, be influenced by certain obligations as existing between individuals of the same caste or clan; might, in fact, remain staunch while fear or prejudice held them in bondage; endure heroic trials for the sake of their religion, and even look death calmly in the face when brought to a pass from which there was no possible escape. But as for that sublime moral principle which leads a man to acknowledge the great law of Right—in fine, that which leads him to do right because it is right—the principle of Truth and Honor and absolute Justice—of this, alas! they had not an atom. It was as if they possessed no conception of any such principle in life.

Hence the secret of our holding out against them as long as we did. For, truth to tell, if Nana Sahib had had even the courage of one of our London scullery maids, and his followers had been equal thereunto, he might have swept us off the face of the earth at a single attack. But, as it was, the bloodthirsty, treacherous coward contented himself with plying his large guns, and ever and anon sending in a demand for surrender. He never exposed his own person within reach of our guns; no, not he, and perhaps it was well, for him, that he did not.

I could not put it out of my mind, the interest he had manifested in Zanee Kooran; and this, coupled with his “fondness” for Colonel Richerson, Captain Winslow and myself, augmented, you may rest assured, my personal hatred for the man. However, he no longer included the detention of us three in

making his demands for surrender. He now promised us all a safe conduct as far as Allahabad, if we would only yield.

The liar! The base deceiver! Time alone was to show us how much dependence we could put in his word. The hideousness which beset us on that evening of Monday, June the 22nd, even I—I who was there and witnessed and took part in it—cannot describe. The most I can say is, it had become for us one living death, with horror on horror, and terror upon terror.

Our animals had all been killed within the lines, and of these not one of the carcasses was buried. It could not be done, and as yet no opportunity had been given us to go outside for the purpose. In point of fact, the most we could do now was to go around on every morning, at the first humid, malignant dawn of day, and reverently gather up the lifeless forms of the men, women and children who had fallen since the previous morning; then, under cover of the fire of two of our large guns, bear them to the old well, and cast them in.

Hence the stench of the putrifying bodies of those animals long dead! Aye, and the great flocks of carrion birds—vultures, buzzards and the like—most repulsive to us in appearance, not to mention myriads of biting and stinging flies, which were attracted there by the odor of blood! Not only did the former affright us day and night by the flapping of their wings, but the latter so filled the air we were forced at all times to have a care lest we inhaled them with our breathings. It was useless to wage war against these. Time and again

we blew countless legions of them out of existence, simply by sprinkling powder lightly over the ground where they swarmed thickest; but repeat these operations as often as we might, the wholesale executions seemed to make no more impression on their teeming millions than so many sudden puffs of wind.

And then, the noise of battle, and the insufferable heat. The constant booming of the enemy's heavy guns; the crash of the solid shot, and the shriek of the shells, which ever threatened us with annihilation; the jeers and yells of the Sepoys; the wailings of terrified women and children; the moans of the wounded; the frequent booming of our own guns in answer to the mutineers' incessant fire; the air thick with the smoke, and sour with the acrid odors, of gunpowder; and, above all, fatigue, hunger, want, despair, poverty, anger, lunacy—the whole gamut of the passions, in brief—assailing us and goading us on to desperation!

For, as a matter of truth, about the last meal had been served that our larder could afford. Famine—absolute famine—was upon us. There was not another ounce of flour to be had, scarcely another ounce of anything eatable.

So Sir Hugh informed us on that memorable evening. He had summoned us, in fact, to his office—a deep excavation near to the line of intrenchments, covered over for a roof with doors and bits of tent canvas.

"Gentlemen," said he, gazing sorrowfully upon us by the light of a single tallow candle; "gentlemen, there is food in abundance within the town, and likewise on the canal. But here—

here, inside the lines, there is none. Therefore, what is to be done?"

"Why, let us have food," said Colonel Scott; and though he said nothing further, his looks bespoke volumes.

"Aye! Let us have food," echoed voice after voice.

"But think," said Sir Hugh. "Between us and the food we must take, if we take any, are from twelve to thirteen thousand Hindus in arms—vengeful, bloodthirsty, merciless, every one."

"Yes, and in our midst stalks a foe a thousand times more frightful," groaned Colonel Scott bitterly; "it is an enemy only to be overcome by boldly facing the enemy without."

"Great powers! It is better to perish, I say, manfully struggling for life—for the salvation of what few dear ones we have yet left us—than to lie down and die supinely. General, I, for one, am ready to follow wherever you will lead," said Richerson, desperately.

"And I!" "And I!" "And I!" exclaimed another and another, until every one present, myself included, had assented.

"God help us!" said Sir Hugh, reverently. Then he unfolded to us his plan whereby we would make the attempt on the morrow to force the enemy back and obtain food.

Accordingly, with the first break of dawn the next morning, he, and likewise the rest of us, duly appeared, armed and equipped, for the desperate venture, which might be only a forlorn hope, after all. He was able to muster one hundred and sixty of us to go with him, and among these were

Captain Winslow and Colonel Richerson. A handful of men, under the command of myself, were to stay inside the intrenchments, to guard them, and also to work the guns. Nearly our whole effective force, however, was to accompany him, and all—officers and men alike—held in their hands the Enfield rifle, the bayonet of which, as they knew how to wield it, was a most formidable weapon. Each man also took a few rounds of ammunition in his pocket—they did not care to burden themselves with belts and cartridge-boxes—and, with a revolver apiece, they went forth.

I had just loaded my gun with a shrapnel shell, and was standing beside the noble piece, vaguely wondering if I should ever again see Zanee Kooran, and be able to press her to my bosom, and ah, tell her, dear girl, how we had striven to save the garrison of Cawnpore, when, suddenly, with one long, loud cry of vengeance, the heroic band sallied out. Sir Hugh, I saw, was leading on one hand, while Colonel Richerson's manly form showed up on the other; and in this manner they sped over the parade-ground, with only one thought—that of beating the dusky horde back and obtaining food. Their first onset, therefore, was crowned with marked success. The Sepoys fell back before them, astounded and utterly frightened, those bayonets striking terror into their hearts as nothing else could.

It chanced I could see the fight from where I stood, just as I had on the previous day; and again and again I beheld that little band of desperate men hurl themselves against forces ten and twenty times their own number, and beat them

back. At certain points and at certain periods it looked almost as if it were one man against one hundred. On three different occasions I witnessed a gathering of the Sepoys in great numbers, for the purpose of checking them; but they dived through the mass in each instance, like a wedge, rending it apart, and as a consequence forcing the mutineers to turn and flee. In truth, every man of the garrison fought like a tiger at bay, and dreadful indeed was the execution wrought by those bayonets in their skillful hands; no matter what the opposition was, they darted, as tongues of flame, above and below the rifles' guard, sweeping through brisket and breastbone. The ground back of them was everywhere strewn with the dead and the dying.

Ah! If Sir Hugh had only had cavalry—even fifty horses—he might have accomplished something; but, as it was, I saw from the first that this tremendous effort of his and his men must be futile. Nothing had as yet been gained of food, and for them to put any great distance between themselves and their works would be exceedingly rash.

Sir Hugh must have perceived this, for all at once I found those familiar faces turned toward me; the men were endeavoring to fight their way back, and it was indeed time. Though they had performed prodigies of valor—aye! though every one had covered himself with glory, it had all been to no avail; rather, it had exposed the fortifications to extreme danger, for now the Sepoys were seeking to cut them off from these, and at the same time get possession of the works. Hardly had Sir

Hugh and his men turned, when they threw themselves upon them in thousands. Howling and brandishing their rifles, spears, *tulwars*, pistols and daggers, the surging mass of dark-skinned demons pressed forward and wholly encompassed the brave men.

For a moment my heart failed me. It seemed now as if nothing could save the gallant little band from being swept away. And yet, it was not. No, but on the contrary, Wheeler and Richerson formed the men again and again into double ranks—happily the levelness of the parade-ground admitted of splendid maneuvering and every kind of evolution—and hurled them against the oncoming tide of demoniac humanity. Then, when the enemy pressed them hottest, they would, perchance, bring them together with the exactness of a machine and, in the form of a hollow square, let them meet the onset from every side; like the towering waves of a storm-beaten sea, the Sepoys would throw themselves upon this, and a minute later find themselves broken—shattered into flickering foam, as those very waves would be upon the sides of a staunch ship. Thus, like lions they fought; and before their never wavering line of sharp bayonets the thousands fell back—aye, melted away, as dense fogs are split and vanished by the sun's penetrative rays, leaving a path open.

Meanwhile we were employing those cannon which could be brought to bear upon the enemy from the intrenchments, with energy. Two of the long guns and a howitzer we loaded and fired so fast water had to be used freely to prevent their becoming red hot. The long twenty-four pound-

ers did splendid work, and when we succeeded occasionally in dropping a shell into the midst of that howling, gesticulating mass before us, the effects were frightful. All in all, hundreds of Sepoys fell.

Once a division of them made toward us as if to capture the works. Accordingly, charging our guns with grape and canister, we took rifles—every one of us who was able—and awaited their approach. Fortunately, they did not think to spread out and encircle the fortifications; rather they came on in a compact body, on one side, and when about fifty yards off, we suddenly let drive at them with every weapon at our command. The result was a terrible slaughter, which threw them into such confusion that they broke and fled. We then resumed the former work of helping our friends.

At length, through the smoke and dust, we caught sight of them. They were still fighting heroically to regain the fortifications, and above the horrible din I could hear Richerson hoarsely giving orders.

They had almost reached the gates of the fortress, and I was beginning to experience a feeling of unspeakable relief, when, as I looked, I saw brave Sir Hugh go down, struck by a bullet in the thigh. At once the Sepoys sprang upon the little phalanx with redoubled fury, and for a time threatened to carry it off through sheer force of numbers. But Richerson, whom nothing seemed to daunt, now took charge of the whole command, while Captain Winslow caught up the disabled

commandant in his arms and, a few minutes later, brought him safely inside the lines.

Very soon thereafter was the last man in (except about a dozen who had been killed or cut off by the mutineers), the gates closed, and we worked our guns rapidly on the baffled enemy, whom, with well-directed discharges of grape and canister, were quickly driven off and held at a safe distance.

In the meantime, the wounded general was being cared for.

None of the women had had better health and been better able to give assistance beyond the care for themselves, than Lillian Richerson and Verona Winslow. Not a word of complaint was heard from either of them as to their sufferings and inconveniences. On the contrary, they manifested remarkable coolness and courage, patience and perseverance. They worked together, and clung to one another, through it all, like sisters.

They now took the wounded general under their sole care, and ere long had him sitting up and able to give his attention to business. Of course, under ordinary circumstances such a hurt would have laid him up completely; but, at that time and in that place, he was no worse off than many others who were not wounded, yet who could not be spared to the sick list. Therefore, owing to this, and good nursing, Sir Hugh, on the second day after he was injured, appeared on duty again.

However, had he been never so badly hurt, he could not have remained in his subterranean retreat long. Our situation at last was desperate in very truth. Men and women were beginning to

die of starvation, and we all wore a wasted, emaciated look. Famine was upon us—in the midst of the camp, and still from the encompassing host without came the same old continuous hail of cannon-balls, which not only ripped up the earth and rent away the last fragments of our shattered buildings, but even ploughed into our underground shelters, ever and anon to tear in pieces a human form.

“I say, Captain Clermonte,” groaned Colonel Scott, hobbling up to me from out of the *débris* of one of these fatalities; “I say, if succor of some kind doesn’t get here by to-morrow night, do you know what we shall have to do? We shall have to *surrender*.”

Alas! It was only too true. It would be death—extermination for us to think of holding out longer than that; and, ah, well, to give ourselves into the hands of Nana Sahib could scarcely make our condition any worse than it was.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SURRENDER AND WHAT SUCCEEDED IT.

ALL the next day—Friday, June 26th—we watched, waited and prayed for help—for anything that would free us from our hellish surroundings and mitigate our suffering. We had yet a faint hope, you see, that an account of Sir Hugh's sad condition might have been taken through by those Madras Fusileers whom Richerson had sent back for that purpose when we arrived here from down the river; in which case relief certainly should be on its way to us by now.

Ah! We little dreamed that nearly all the country down the Ganges was by this time in a state of open rebellion; that Allahabad (that place to which Nana Sahib promised us a safe conduct if we would only surrender to him) had just been the scene of a frightful carnage—a carnage attended in many instances by the most fiendish cruelty; that Benares—even grand old Benares—had been beset by the shadow which, but for the prompt action of Colonel Neill, must have left it stained with the blackest horrors.

We had reached the end of possible endurance. Therefore, to be frank, it was with much anxiety

that I saw two messengers of the Sepoys, their guns having suddenly ceased to roar, ride up to our gates, that evening, when the sun still lacked an hour of setting, bearing white flags.

They came to inform us, they said, that Nana Sahib sent to remind Sir Hugh Wheeler, commanding the English forces of Cawnpore, how he and his people—every one of them, remember—should have permission to depart for Allahabad, if they would only surrender to him their works, together with all government property under their charge, and all treasures in their possession. Yes, the Rajah pledged himself solemnly that, upon a full and complete capitulation, as stated, he would suffer the whole garrison to depart, and, further, give each individual all the aid he could possibly need in the preparation.

Did the Maha-Sahib, General Wheeler, doubt their word—ask for stronger assurance than they were able to give? Then they would depart, and in an hour's time come back again, bringing with them undeniable proofs and proper authority.

True to their promise for once, they did return just as the day was closing, in company with three subahdars; and, upon Sir Hugh's invitation, they all threw themselves down at the entrance of the works—that is, after we had so arranged two cannon there that they could not fully detect the awful wretchedness of our situation within.

Here the general conferred with them for a while, then summoned his chief officers, including Colonel Richerson, Captain Winslow and myself, together with all the principal women of the garrison, and asked us what we should do? Alas!

What *could* we do? We must either surrender or perish.

Yet the proud old commandant, upon whose shoulders the entire responsibility of this sad affair had fallen, and whom our country had trusted, could not bring himself, an honored and gallant Knight of the Bath, to speak the hateful, fateful word; and yet, it must be spoken!

Suddenly, when the silence had become almost unbearable, and our tired and reeling brains were on the point of bursting under the tension of suspense, Colonel Richerson bent forward and whispered for a moment to Colonel Scott; the result of which was, the latter nodded in approval and at once said:

"Sir Hugh! General! There is no alternative left us but to submit to the inevitable. There is a chance, to be sure, that succor might reach us some time; but I, for one, am not prepared, voluntarily, to immolate myself, and I do not care to sacrifice my wife. And it is above questioning that if we remain much longer as we are, it will be suicidal. I make the motion, therefore, that we accept the terms offered by Nana Sahib, holding him to a faithful performance of his pledge. *We will surrender!*"

"I second the motion of Colonel Scott," said Richerson, in tones hoarse and agonized, but withal firm and emphatic.

I had looked to see the general insert some sort of protest—or, at least, put forth a proposition; but not a word had he of his own to offer. Rather he encouraged the motion made by asking for a rising vote on it; the result of which was,

every one of the officers present, with the exception of himself, rose to our feet, and, presently, the women followed suit.

Thus was the matter decided. We would surrender. Accordingly the envoys were called up from the distance to which they had been sent while this discussion was being held, and informed of the decision. Then the necessary arrangements were made whereby we would deliver the garrison to Nana Sahib at break of day, on the following morning.

This matter completed, some one suggested that the envoys be asked to send us in food; but from this Sir Hugh shrank as from a deed of dishonor. Albeit he was himself starving as much as the rest of us, he scorned to accept such a favor at rebel hands.

My heart ached for the baronet then, and more yet the next morning when I awoke and saw the first blood-red streaks of dawn shooting up in the eastern sky, like evil lights, they seemed to me, from the Lower World. He had made a noble defense—a defense unparalleled; had offered his blood and his best efforts for the sake of the Governor-general and Her Majesty; aye, had expended every expedient in his power to keep and preserve that which had been intrusted to his care. And now—now even—he would not yield. He had submitted, it was true, but it was merely through exhaustion; by no means was he a conquered or a humbled soldier. At an early hour that morning, as had been agreed upon, a large detachment of Sepoys came to the fortress and aided us to get to the river, half a mile away,

where we were to take boats. Those of us who could go on foot had been marched out, and the women and children—all children of tender years—with the sick and wounded, placed in comfortable carriages that had been brought down from the European bungalows; but though among them was Sir Hugh's own family coach, he, to our surprise, preferred to hobble along with us, his wound having so far healed as to admit of this, rather than ride.

It was a slow and painful operation, but at last everything was ready, and we set forward, honored by nearly the whole Sepoy host who had turned out, apparently, for the purpose of doing escort duty. Not only did they march before and behind and on both flanks of us, but they marched far and near; and all were gayly attired, while many bore flags and streamers attached to spears. Great, also, was the din made by them with drums and horns and cymbals, and tremendous the send-off they gave us, as "Good-by, John Bull!" "Never come back any more, Englishmen!" and the like. Nana Sahib, however, was nowhere to be seen.

But when we reached the landing place a gaudily uniformed subahdar awaited us, at the top of the ghat, where stood a small Hindu temple. At his side was a juggler whom, on second glance, I remembered as having seen many a time in the cantonments at Benares, where he was wont to come and mystify us with his magic, the secrets of which he, like all others of his craft, guarded most jealously. His name was Majub, and in Secrole he had always been looked

upon as friendly; but why was he here, associating with and to every appearance one of this horrid crew? Why, indeed? A strange presentiment began to creep over me—an indescribable fear that everything was not as it should be.

Nor was my apprehension by any means allayed when a few minutes later our march was checked and Majub, preceded by the subahdar, whose servant he seemed to be, came up to the side of us officers, eying us sharply and finally stopping before Colonel Richerson, Captain Winslow and myself. For a time the twain conversed in low tones, then the subahdar gave some commands I could not understand, and a dozen Sepoys straightway walked up to us three, took us by the arms and led us into the shadow of that temple, separate and away from Sir Hugh and his men.

"Gad, I guess they're going to convert us," said Charlie humorously, by way of keeping up our spirits; for we had no doubt but this detention was authorized by Nana Sahib.

The bank of the Ganges being rather high, the way down to the river was steep, and the sick and wounded consequently had to be carried and placed in the boats bodily by the Sepoys; all of which we could see, notwithstanding that there was a thick jungle. Before this was accomplished, we also saw that Sir Hugh was beginning to be uneasy, and we even heard him ask why the Nana did not come to see him off and bid him farewell.

"He has not the heart, Maha-Sahib," replied a subahdar of high rank. "It would grieve him sorely to see his old friend and bid him good-by,

and he might break down; and that, you know, would appear unmanly before all his soldiers."

"But I don't want to get into that boat until I have seen my wife," persisted the general. "The fact is, I want her with me."

All the sick and wounded were now comfortably arranged in the boats, where most of the men had also taken their places; but more than half the women and smaller children were being detained on the bank by the Sepoys, a group of whom had just escorted Sir Hugh and the last of his officers—his military staff—to the head of the ghat.

"Don't worry about them," said the subahdar who had first spoken to him. "It is the Great Rajah's wish that we see the men in the boats first; and when he speaks we must obey."

Therefore, rather than to be forced in, as they evidently would have been, Sir Hugh and his men went quietly down the ghat and stepped into the boats. But hardly were they in, when these were all suddenly and unexpectedly pushed out into the stream.

At the same moment three guns were discharged in quick succession from the camp which we knew the Nana to be occupying.

"Great powers! What does that mean?" cried Richerson, in alarm.

"By the gods of the Ganges! It's treachery," answered Captain Winslow, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"Heaven help us! You are right, Charlie," I groaned.

And indeed! In another moment, from a thick mass of tangled wildwood on the river's bank, a

line of bushes fell, as if by magic, to the ground and a masked battery there poured onto the unprotected boats a storm of death. Then, with the rolling away of the smoke of the cannon, thousands of howling Sepoys hastened along the shore—on both sides—with rifles, and began the sport of killing. They were good marksmen—every one of them, and they meant that not a man of the betrayed garrison should escape alive.

Alas! How well they succeeded in their dreadful work is a matter of history. Tell it I cannot, for after gazing on the revolting spectacle long enough to grasp its meaning, to know that it was reality, I shut my eyes with horror and loathing; aye, covered my ears with my hands that I might not hear the heart-rending shrieks of the women and the piteous cries of the children who had been detained there on the ghat, and were now given every opportunity to behold the slaughter of their friends, their husbands and fathers.

The colonel and the captain were made of sterner stuff, however. They braved the whole tragedy through. At any rate, they saw enough of it so that they were afterwards able to tell me all about it.

General Wheeler and the good old chaplain, Moncrieff, had risen at the first discharge of the artillery, they said, and stood in their boat, clasped in each other's arms, to die together. For a moment they had stood thus, their faces calm and serene, and full of faith sublime, and unfaltering trust in the Heaven toward which they looked; then—ah, well, their fate had been the fate of the rest.

During it all the women on shore, the wives of these martyred officers, had afforded their captors no end of diversion. Some had appealed to them for mercy, some bowed their heads in prayer, and others had fainted.

Still, the butchery went on, and in conclusion two boats which had been followed by the Sepoys, were overtaken and brought back to the starting place, and the men left alive in them dragged up before us and shot. Hence it was that that spot is known, and will be known while the English language continues and the annals of Great Britain exist, as "the slaughter ghat."

Certainly, for brutality, this surpassed anything we had witnessed, and standing there in the background of that temple, we trembled. We had reason to. We knew not at what moment we, too, might be dragged forth to suffer a like fate, though had the Sepoys sprung upon us for that purpose, we would almost have welcomed it then.

Oh, bitterly I recalled now Zanee Kooran's friendly words when we parted: "*Remember, the Sepoys, when once aroused, are perfectly heartless, and, what is worse, treacherous to the core. . . . And, Henry, Dhundoo Punt is naturally more cruel, crafty and perfidious than any of the others. Hence, beware of him particularly, if not for your sake, then for mine.*" And here—here I was in the hands of the wretch! Poor girl! What pain it would give her when she came to hear of it. How would she take it? In all probability I should then be dead, and no doubt the blow would cause her, too, to pine away and perish like an injured flower.

No, it was useless, in the midst of this horrid horde, to think that we should ever meet again on earth. The glory of her superb form I would never see any more; the music of her sweet voice I had long since heard for the last time. Her noble efforts to befriend the weak and innocent had been worse than futile; they had brought her and myself together, only to tear us apart, and, now, despite every endeavor to the contrary, placed me in a position which must bring upon her an unbearable sorrow.

After what seemed an age to me, though it was in reality only a few minutes, the massacre came to an end, and the women and children, what were left of them, cruelly taken off to that prison-house, the Subada Ke Kothce, made famous by their memorable imprisonment there.

Next a carriage was driven down where the colonel, Charlie and I were standing, and on its halting before us, we were surprised to see in it, apparently unharmed further than for being frightened beyond the power of speech, both Verona Winslow and Lillian Richerson.

"Sahibs, you must enter now and submit to a little journey," said the subahdar who had detained us, and at whose side still hung the juggler, Majub.

Like men in a trance we obeyed, the colonel and captain grateful to be at the side of their wives, and I content with finding a restful seat.

Then, with a guard of mounted Sepoys about us, we were whirled away—whither and for what purpose we knew not, nor did we much care. In our terrified and exhausted state, it was sufficient to us that our lives had been spared.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HILL FORTRESS OF CULPEEDAH.

IT was the morning of July the 10th, just thirteen days since our surrender to Nana Sahib and the merciless massacre of Sir Hugh Wheeler and his gallant men. We five, Colonel Richerson and wife, Captain Winslow and wife, and I, were being conveyed in the same carriage and escorted by the same crew by whom we had been removed from the scene of that diabolical deed. Only now our course was through the open, broken country, southward from Cawnpore.

Wonderful to relate, we were enjoying the journey immensely. We were in good spirits, for now we were well fed and well clothed, and had it not been for our uncertainty as to the fate awaiting us, might have derived as much pleasure from our ride as any *rais* (prince) and his suite out in state for an airing.

The mutineers, when they bore us away on that memorable morning, had taken us down close to the city proper and there installed us in the bungalow of a certain captain of the Fifty-sixth Native Infantry, who was killed early in the siege.

It was large and luxurious, situated in the midst of a garden resplendent with flowers of tropical growth, none of which had as yet been marred by a marauding hand. Here, instead of being ill-treated, we had been fed like potentates. White-robed and turbaned servants attended us everywhere. They looked after all our wants, seeming nearly always to anticipate them for us, and it mattered not whether we were sitting on the shaded veranda partaking of refreshments and beguiling the time by playing at chess or whist, or reclining, as the case might be, on downy divans in the sumptuously furnished rooms within, and puffing at our hookahs, one or more of them had generally stood behind us, gently fanning us with huge lacquered fans which rested on the floor.

Really, in every way familiar to them had the Sepoys tried to make us forget the horrible past, and become like ourselves again; and in a measure they had succeeded. Thanks to their kind treatment, we had fully recovered from the effects of the siege.

Therefore, was it small wonder the careful attention given us, and the fact that we had not yet been visited nor even molested by the Rajah of Bithoor, had left us filled with perplexity bordering at times upon madness? Judging from what he had already done, we felt sure the Nana was making an instrument of us to serve some horribly evil motive for him; but how could we help ourselves? To escape, or even to think of it, was out of the question; and when we had asked any of our guards or attendants why we were confined and treated as we were, always did they tell us we

should know well enough, and that in good time, if we would only be patient and wait a little longer.

It now at last looked, as we rode along, that the period of their promises was about to dawn. True, we had not yet obtained an inkling as to where our journey was to end; but early that morning our repose had been broken by an official-looking Hindu who rode into the garden with much pomp and conferred with our chief captors. Indeed, he was a very large, imposing man, with whiskers brushed back like a grandee, and the way he bustled about, gesticulated and menacingly grasped the hilt of his *tulwar*, made those to whom he gave orders execute them in a hurry. Consequently, in an incredibly short time we were made ready, bustled into the coach, which had been brought around to the steps of the veranda for this purpose, and out on the road, attended by the author of it all, like the rest of our escort, on horseback.

Hence it was, when we had been riding for some time, that Captain Winslow surprised me by whispering discreetly in my ear:

"Hist, Henry! Hist, I say; but do you know who that big fellow is?"

"No," I replied, equally prudent, but alive with curiosity.

"Well, don't let them see that you are surprised now. It's *Pyu Yet!*"

"Why, Charlie! He must have been sent here then to help us," said I, hardly able to suppress my excitement, my hopes, doubts and fears, as sweet recollections of Zanee Kooran and her faithful servant flooded my brain.

"Shouldn't wonder," he answered with perfect nonchalance; "but keep cool, I say. Let events take their course."

Presently we were all startled by the Sepoys shouting, "*Ghir! ghir!*" (the fortress, the fortress). Peering ahead, we, too, caught sight of a grim old pile of stone, which looked like a castle of the Middle Ages.

Built on a high hill—a stool of rock, so to speak, occupying the center of an arid plain, its great walls or ramparts could be discerned even at that distance—three-quarters of a mile or more. As we drew nearer I saw that these were dotted with embrasures, out of which peeped the muzzles of more or less cannon.

This was merely the fringe of the work, however. The true affair consisted of three tall, circular structures, each of which terminated in a conical roof, the middle one being the highest as well as the largest; and these not only stood inside the outer walls, but several yards back from them. Indeed, the whole constituted a regular citadel, occupying at its extreme base, I afterwards ascertained, a good rood and a half of ground; and as it was approachable only on one side—up a smooth, bare slope and finally through a fortified gateway in the rampart, it was practically impregnable to assault. For on the other three sides the rock fell away with almost sheer abruptness, where from its summit it was more than a hundred and forty feet down to the parched plain.

Further south was a nullah, a small stream now, but evidently a torrent in the rainy season, and on

the banks of this stood a typical Hindu village, embowered in a beautiful grove.

It was the citadel, however, that interested us most, for there, apparently, lay our destination, and as we drew closer to it our guards began to shout exultantly—all save Pyu Yet. He maintained his composure with rigid severity, glancing neither to the right nor left; and soon we heard answering shouts. Next came a burst of martial music, and then we saw, a little in advance of us, and headed toward the castle, a very imposing pageant.

In the van was a number of elephants, the foremost one of which was draped with tinsel and trappings extraordinary, while from a platform on its back rose a flagstaff to which was attached a banner right royal. This was surrounded by a squad of cavalry in dazzling uniforms, and the whole preceded by a native band.

Likewise were the eight or nine elephants that followed richly caparisoned, the largest one especially. This beast, in fact, was almost concealed by a cloth of scarlet, heavily embroidered with gold, and the *howdah* it bore was gorgeous. It was composed principally of silver, and surmounted by two domes which were of solid silver, burnished so highly that they shone like suns. Nor was the interior lacking any in beauty and splendor; it was lined with sumptuous cushions, curtains and the like, of silk and satin, and all freely adorned with gold and jewels.

For us, however, it had no attractions, for there, in company with several other dignitaries, sat "the Tiger of Cawnpore," Nana Sahib!

Accordingly our spirits sank to the lowest ebb. We felt that the hour of our doom was close at hand, and were confident that we should be subjected to the most fiendish tortures the Nana was capable of devising.

The ladies turned very pale, and I am sure they would have fainted but for the reassuring presence of Pyu Yet. But of what avail would be his strength when opposed by the might of the Nana? Ah, cunning and diplomacy alone must be employed now if we were to be saved; for following those elephants, about which was a guard of honor, bearing flags, fans and spears, came foot-soldiers and cavalry to the number of more than three thousand!

In advancing the Nana and his host held to their original course, the same as ourselves, and so we did not fall in with them until we had all come under the frowning walls of the citadel, which I then found were well manned. Meanwhile, tents had been erected by an advanced guard, and into one of these, comparted by drapery, we were straightway conducted. Here water in which to bathe and a change of raiment awaited us, and after our toilet had been performed, we were led to another tent and there served with a lunch consisting chiefly of fruits.

While we were partaking of this—for the jostling we had received in the coach, notwithstanding everything to the contrary, proved very appetizing—I was given an exceptionally large bunch of fine grapes, and in pulling them off and devouring them came upon a tiny slip of vellum. It had been deftly tucked in among the stems and berries,

and I now as deftly tucked it into the hollow of my hand, something seeming to whisper—I suppose it was the impulse of the moment—that it was intended for me.

Waiting with suppressed excitement until the attendants were a little less observant of our wants, I stole a peep at it, and—oh! with what joy, saw that which exceeded my wildest hopes. It was a note, penned in a fine, delicate hand—a hand I would have recognized among thousands—and ran as follows:

“DEAREST HENRY: If this reaches you, remember it will be through Pyu Yet, whom you and your friends can trust implicitly. Ask no questions of any one, therefore, but do, all of you, as you are bidden. Be surprised at nothing—not even if you should be brought face to face with Zanee Kooran, BEGAUM OF BENARES.”

Ah! What a mingling, what a compound of rapture and yearning swept through me. Like the ray of a beacon-fire to shipwrecked mariners, this came without a doubt from her whom I loved best of all beings on earth. But where, oh, where was she that she should be able to get word to me so readily? And what did she mean in warning me not to be surprised, even though I should be brought face to face with her? Had she placed her head in the Tiger’s mouth that we might, perhaps, be snatched from his claws? I found myself laboring under a multitude of painful emotions, and that, I knew, would never do. No, I

must control myself now, or it might result in no end of trouble.

As soon as our lunch was over, the same subahdar who had had charge of us since he saved our lives by detaining us at "the slaughter ghat," entered, salaamed to us and said:

"Sahibs, it is the Great Rajah's pleasure that you and the sahibas (ladies) come with me now into the *ghir*."

Outside the tent was a guard of ten Sepoys, with drawn swords, who took us in charge and escorted us up the hill to the gates of the citadel, which we found were of heavy timber, and so thickly studded with bolts their outer surface presented the appearance of solid iron.

Passing through these we came into a courtyard of considerable size; and here I observed that each of the central structures, in addition to round towers built into the walls, were balconied, with balustrades of massive timber, just beneath or under the eaves of the projecting roof. They furnished an excellent position for riflemen, which fact was made manifest by men looking down at us from them with carbines in their hands. But the whole place, for that matter, presented a strong military appearance, the yard being full of Sepoys who were armed and ready for action at a moment's notice.

The *thannadar* (chief of the place) awaited our approach before the grand entrance-way of the main or central building, and, having given us a deferential salaam, he conducted us, with our guards, into this.

We entered first a spacious vestibule, paved with

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different colored marbles, and then, after climbing a huge flight of elaborate stairs, came to a wide corridor, with several large doorways, all on one side. These were arranged and shaped at their top somewhat like an arcade, only the arches were indented with deep scallops, while in the spaces above and between them were carvings, exquisite arabesques and immovable processions of people in whose pose expressed there on the stone, even my friends and I could read many of the manners and customs of India.

But as nothing blocked those portals now, that which lay hidden beyond them interested us more than anything else. Indeed, a strange, humming noise, as of many people congregated, issued from them, and we felt that there our next adventure, so to speak, would occur.

We were not to be disappointed.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TIGER SHOWS HIS TEETH.

WE were now conducted by the *thannadar* into the audience chamber of Culpeedah. Here we found ourselves in the presence of a *darbar* (court reception), the like of which we had never seen, and which I, at least, have never forgotten.

The walls, of stucco, were draped with heavy curtains and tapestries, which were not only glossy and rich, but of deep, resplendent hues; and many a fold of these was looped back here and there to expose, shyly, some magnificently mounted painting or Oriental vase—ornaments ostensibly borrowed from the bungalows of the martyred heroes at Cawnpore. The ceiling, too, was quaintly and artistically frescoed, and it terminated at the centre in a large rectangular opening; this was bordered by columns of white marble inlaid with arabesque work. Beautiful plants were attractively arranged about the base of these pillars; and to illumine the whole, the sunlight streamed down through that aperture in the ceiling, and added charm to the beauty of our surroundings, like a gift from Heaven.

There was a dais at the head of the hall, and

there, in regal splendor, and under a huge canopy of silk, silver and gold, sat a man on a *gadi* (throne). He seemed about forty years old, and was very fat. His complexion was scarcely darker than that of a dark Spaniard, and his expression betokened, on the whole, a jovial, if not somewhat rollicking disposition. The eyes in his round face were very wild, brilliant and restless, and to me, sitting there as he did, he looked like a human tiger, which, in truth, he was, this Nana Sahib.

Like satellites, several of his chiefs were clustered about him, while back of him was a squad of his body-guard, and behind these, in turn, various retainers and attendants of his court, two *chobdars* (bearers of sticks of office) also being there to perfect the scene.

Despite all this pomp and show, however, and the fact that we were at last face to face with the perpetrator of so many crimes, our interest and enthusiasm centered upon a certain individual who occupied a position a little to the right of the Rajah, down on the floor of the hall, and away from the *gadi*.

There, ah! there, in an exquisitely carved chair, sat Zance Kooran, the sight of whom filled me with a mixture of unspeakable pleasure and sorrow: pleasure in that I once more beheld her after passing through the eternity of horrors; sorrow because she was apparently so hopelessly and helplessly in the power of this most abominable monster.

It was true that back of her stood the giant, Pyu Yet, and with him a dozen Khattriyas—all stalwart men and amply accoutered—who, I subse-

quently learned, were attached to her service and ready, if the need arose, to lay down their lives for her. But what could they do against such a host as was here? Indeed, enough were in the hall alone to overpower them several times over, not to mention those in the court-yard outside and the thousands mustered on the plain below!

And yet, it was not improbable that there might be a clash of arms, for little either of homage or of deference did the princess and her retinue show the Sepoys. I was astounded at this, and could not divine its meaning; I could only think how she and myself, and all of us, for that matter, were in the hands of this man whom we hated and feared. Following the *thannadar* up the hall, surrounded still by our escort, my heart hung like a plummet in my breast, my feet dragged as if weighted with lead, and what made me even more dejected, I saw that my friends were similarly affected.

In point of fact, what hope had we there? Not a sign, as yet, had Zanee Kooran given us as to what we might expect or how proceed; she had not even glanced at us, but rather dropped her veil the moment we entered the hall, her apparel, which was of silk, being made in up-to-date European style, and richly adorned with jewels.

At her feet, though, was spread a leopard's skin, and on this, on stools, sat the two ayahs who attended her when I first saw her in her gondola on the river at Benares.

And now, having arrived at the head of the hall, before the dais and to the feet of Nana Sahib himself, the *thannadar* made a profound bow and

stepped aside ; then the subahdar who had been our chief jailer, took his place, similarly bowed, and said :

“Great and mighty Rajah ! Your slave, Koambux, craves permission to say that he has at last brought you, safe and sound, as your Highness desired, the five Feringhees whom you so emphatically commanded him to preserve, and to feed and care for as if they were of your own kith and kin.”

“Where are they ?” the Nana asked, without looking up.

“Here, before you, my Lord,” the subahdar answered.

“You have done well, Koambux ; you are a good and faithful servant, and I will see, in due time, that you are fittingly rewarded,” the Rajah said, glancing now at him kindly. But to us, his prisoners, he paid not the slightest attention.

“And now, my dear princess,” he continued, turning to Zanee Kooran—by the way, the confidential stress he laid on those two words set my blood boiling—“may I trouble you to inspect the prisoners and see whether they are the persons whom you want ?”

“Certainly, Rajah. But suppose I let Majub ask them their names ? The sound of their voices will decide the matter just as well, and with much less trouble,” she replied haughtily and, it was easy to hear, with a touch of sarcasm, which, together with the longed-for music of her tones, tended not a little to cool my sudden anger.

“All right, princess ; let it be so, then. Your

wish is my wish," and with a flourish of his jeweled hand, he gave her a tender glance.

How I hated the monster. And, more exasperating still, I fancied he detected it and took delight in trying to make me miserable. It was evident, nevertheless, that he loved the Begaum.

Meanwhile, Majub the juggler—for he it was—emerged from behind Pyu Yet and the Khattriyas and approaching us, asked each of us, in turn, our name.

This ceremony over, the monster provokingly inquired: "Well, my fair one, are you satisfied?"

"Yes, Rajah, I am satisfied that these are my friends," Zanee Kooran replied. She would have spoken further, I saw, but at this moment a *hulkara* (messenger in livery) came hurrying up the hall with a dispatch in his hand, which he gave to the Nana, after having made him a most deferential salaam.

"Princess, what means this about General Havelock's setting out from Allahabad, with a few paltry regiments, to force his way up here?" the monster growled, when he had finished his perusal of the letter.

"I didn't know that he had set out," she said in suppressed tones—tones which nevertheless trembled with joy, as likewise did the hearts of my friends and me.

"But I am so informed," he continued, his face distorted with wrath. "Fool! Doesn't he know my big army, with so many great guns, will cut him and all his host into pieces before he can get half way here? Well, it can, and, by the gods, it shall!"

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Thus speaking, he signed to one of his attendants, who straightway brought him writing materials; wherefore, quickly preparing a dispatch, he sent the *hulkara* off with it.

Before the message had been made ready, however, Zanee Kooran bent over and whispered something to one of her ayahs. The result was, the woman rose and quickly left the hall by an exit in the rear. When she returned she brought her mistress a cup of water. Her going and coming, therefore, attracted no material attention.

"Now, my dear princess," said Nana Sahib, gallantly, after the *hulkara* was dismissed, "we will settle down and talk business. You say these Feringhees are your friends. Are you sure of it?"

"Perfectly, Rajah," she answered, without a tremor; "and nothing would please me more than coming to an agreement about them at once."

"Ho! ho! My wishes exactly," he burst out, giving her such a covetous glance it almost drove me to distraction.

"My dear princess, permit me to say, therefore, that I gladly accept the terms as set forth by you in your letter of June the 20th, and will now proceed to fulfill my part of the contract by turning the prisoners over to you.

"Yes, my adorable one, they are yours; do with them as you choose." And rising, he bowed to her reverently, then motioned to our escort, who straightway lowered their swords and fell back several paces.

Ah, alone, surprised, grateful, delighted, we stood there—my friends and I—before them all.

This, then, was the way we were to be delivered?

Truly, the Begaum was a friend to us—aye, a guardian angel, and our indebtedness to her we could never hope to repay. Nor that the Nana was not without his good qualities, was likewise manifest.

And yet, in standing there, we somehow did not feel at our ease.

Oh, words cannot describe the painful pulsations that surged through me, as I stood there and saw her return the monster's courtesy. They simply tried to outdo each other in mockery.

All things have to come to an end some time, however; and in a minute, although it seemed to me indefinitely long, the Nana was again seated, and Zanee Kooran giving instructions, in Hindustani, to Majub and Pyu Yet.

As a consequence, the former came up to us and, bidding us follow him, conducted us to some chairs set a little to the left of the princess—that is, so that she was now between us and the *gadi*.

Pyu Yet, in the meantime, having left the hall by the same door through which Zanee Kooran's ayah had passed when she brought her mistress the drink of water, now entered, bearing in his arms an ebony casket, bound with fine gold, and inlaid with mother-of-pearl.

Kneeling before the princess, he held this out to her, while she deliberately produced from her girdle a golden key; this she inserted in the side of the box and, giving it a turn, threw back the lid.

Now, I had expected—and so had everybody else in the hall, judging by their appearance—to see a mass of glittering jewels exposed; but, lo!

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nothing of the kind occurred. On the contrary, the casket seemed to be quite empty.

It was not, however, for reaching her hand into its depths, Zanee Kooran drew forth a roll of the finest vellum, which she now held up to the Nana, saying: "There, Rajah, is my part of the contract. There is represented the *crore* (million of pounds) you implored me to let you have last March."

"Ah!" the monster exclaimed, his eyes gleaming, his fingers twitching, for he was an egregious prince and avaricious throughout. "Ah-h! But, surely, you haven't got everything there made out in proper form, have you, my dear princess?"

"Yes," she replied.

"What! Is the whole ready for me the moment I receive it?" he asked.

"Certainly," she repeated. "You see, Rajah, I didn't want to delay you any more than possible after we had met—after you had delivered my friends up to me, and I was assured of their being alive and well."

"Good!" he cried, laughing and clapping his hands; then he signed to an attendant, whom I took to be his treasurer, to step forward and receive the coveted document.

"Yes, Rajah," continued Zanee Kooran, in sweet, modulated tones, "I wrote you that this sum should be yours, if you adhered strictly to my terms. Is it not so?"

"Ah, it is, my adorable one," he answered, eying her as a tiger might its prey.

"Well," said she, absolutely ignoring the treasurer, who was now cringing before her, "I must

say that you have thus far performed your part exceedingly well."

"That is so," he exclaimed; "I have. You haven't a word of fault to find with me, have you?"

"No, I have not," she replied.

"Ah, just hear that!" he shouted triumphantly. "Just hear it, though! I have done exactly what Zanee Kooran, Begaum of Benares, has asked of me. She says so herself, and it is so. Can she, therefore, require anything more of me? Certainly not.

"And yet, I will be generous. Oh, yes, I will be generous. What will I do? Why, grant the five Feringhees, whom I have just handed over to her, permission to set out for Allahabad at once—outfit them, in fact, for the journey, and may it be a happy one for them!"

We—my friends and I—listened, not in the least surprised, though, for my part, I experienced a sensation of despair that paralyzed and sickened me; the more so as the monster's face had suddenly grown distorted—aye, as a fiend's might that was inwardly exulting over some malignant machination. At last was the beast in him beginning to crop out.

Zanee Kooran, however, was apparently as calm as ever. Wonderful to relate, she seemed almost to be deriving pleasure out of the situation, as she said:

"Ah, good Rajah, I am so delighted in your coming to the point so readily. As regards my English friends and me, you have expressed my wishes exactly. Therefore, I will only trouble you

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now to receipt the acceptance of this paper"—she made no motion, however, toward giving it to the now thoroughly abashed treasurer—"and then we will proceed—my friends and I—to rid ourselves at once of your kind hospitality."

"Ho! ho! My houri! *You* shall do nothing of the kind," he snarled. "Leave me? By the gods, no! Ho! *I* am lord and master in this land to-day, and you may as well know, first as last, that it is my intention of your accompanying my court and paying me a visit in my own palace at Bithoor."

"Why, Rajah, I am afraid you are dreaming," she said, in well-feigned surprise. "That is not our bargain at all."

"Well, it makes no difference," he growled. "I have waited long for you to visit me, and *now* you shall. So hand over that document, like the good princess you are, and I will see if it is correct."

He was now becoming so ferocious and menacing, the colonel, Charlie and I had all we could do to maintain our composure. On the other hand, however, Zanee Kooran kept perfectly cool. Instead of giving up the roll of vellum to the waiting treasurer, as commanded, she quietly and even tantalizingly laid it down in her lap. How so? Because Pyu Yet now stood erect at her side, and owing to his intimidatory presence—he had grasped the hilt of a dagger stuck in his sash, you see—few men would have had the heart to deprive her of it then, least of all the treasurer.

"Come! Hand over that paper at once," said Nana Sahib, sternly. This seemed to be the very

speech she had been waiting for, for she quietly replied:

"Grant my friends and me leave to depart from here, and I will, Rajah."

"That I will never do! No, by the gods! I won't give any of you permission to depart now," he cried, with great emphasis.

"Then you can't have this paper," she said firmly.

"What is that?" he roared.

"I say you cannot have this document at all," she repeated, unmoved.

"I can't, eh? By the gods! we'll see about that. What! Do you think to thwart me—*me*, lord and ruler of all this land? Well, know then, that it cannot be done. Ho! Guards, seize the Feringhees and bind them—every one of them!"

The colonel, Charlie and I leaped to our feet as one man. Several Sepoys stood in front of us, and these we turned our attention to, to ascertain how we could best get possession of their weapons. Now that the moment for action had come, we were determined to struggle manfully, and if we must perish, to perish then and there.

CHAPTER XV.

CONFIDENCES MISPLACED.

WE three stood there with every muscle set, every nerve strung to the utmost tension, for action. Ah, let any of the Rajah's guards make but the least motion against us, and we were ready to spring upon them, albeit we knew we should have died for it the next moment.

Happily for them, perhaps, and certainly so for us, they all remained perfectly still. Even those who should have assailed us by reason of their being nearest to us, showed no inclination to.

We were beginning to wonder at this, when suddenly Zanee Kooran startled us with a rippling peal of laughter.

"Why, Rajah!" she exclaimed mockingly, "what is the matter with your excellent soldiers? Why don't they obey you better?"

"Ho! You dogs! Do you want to be taken out and made an example of before the whole army?" he asked, turning furiously to those Sepoys in front of us. "Well, then, seize the Feringhees and bind them."

"Sit down," whispered the colonel to Charlie and me. "Sit down, I say; you'll enjoy it better."

As he was now perfectly composed, and very much amused, we complied with him, though I was not yet able to see what there was to be elated over. True, not a single Sepoy had offered to molest us so far, but there must be a change soon; such a desperate crisis could not continue much longer.

Meanwhile the princess was laughing again—even more insultingly than before, and the Nana looking at her in surprise, vexation and bewilderment. Probably he was not accustomed to being disobeyed, above all, ridiculed so, for forthwith he called out in a loud voice:

“Koambux?”

“Yes, my lord,” answered the subahdar promptly.

“Have your guards seize the Feringhees and bind them, as I have bidden. *Thannadar*,” turning to the chief of the citadel, “see that those refractory rascals of yours are treated in the same way.”

Thus enjoined, the group first referred to—the same who had escorted us into the hall, raised their swords and rushed upon us; but hardly had they taken a half dozen paces when the *thannadar* flashed his hand upward and cried, “Halt!”

“Not another step, Koambux, if you and your men value your lives,” he said quietly. A caution which was hardly needed, however, in that their onset had already been checked by a group of his soldiers in front of us, who, in accordance with his signal, now menaced them with leveled muskets.

Had a bomb exploded in our midst, we could

scarcely have been more surprised. Still, it composed me somewhat, for it showed me Zanee Kooran was able, in part at least, to cope with the monster; the more so as he at once sprang to his feet and cried:

"Ho! Treason! Help, help!"

But the only response he got was a rattle of arms all over the hall, and, looking around, he found himself and his court—chiefs, guards, attendants, every one—covered by more than a score of Enfields from various quarters.

"That is right, Rajah; shout away. Indeed, shout all you want to," said Zanee Kooran exultingly, as he dropped down upon his seat in astonishment.

"What does this mean, anyway?" he growled at length, like a tiger at bay.

"Why simply that you are my prisoner," she answered sweetly. She was determined to equal him now, in mockery, if possible.

"Prisoner!" he echoed, with an expression of terror. "*I*, your prisoner?"

"Certainly," she replied, with perfect complaisance.

"Oh, come! This is too absurd," he said, with a disparaging shrug of his shoulders. "How can I be your prisoner, pray, when surrounded with my own men?"

"For the simple reason that they will no longer obey you, but rather me. You see, Rajah, I have bribed them—hired them to exchange your service for mine; consequently this whole fortress is at my command."

"I—I don't believe it!" he cried, his eyes dilat-

ing; "I don't believe it. What! Would any of my men be mad enough to dare serve another than *me*, knowing, as they do, my hate, my power—by the gods! How I can hurl thousands upon them, if necessary, to crush them?"

There was silence for a moment in the chamber, as he glanced sharply around to note the effect of his speech; but, barring our escort, who had been disarmed by the *thannadar's* men, and his own retinue, he found not a friend present.

Nothing daunted, however, he turned and addressed those in his rear.

"Ho! Guards, chiefs, attendants," he said, "sweep these dogs aside, that I may depart from here."

Instantly there was a renewed rattle of arms about the hall, and as a result he and his retinue were covered by as many again muskets as before.

"Ha, ha! Are you satisfied now, Rajah, that you are my prisoner?" asked Zanee Kooran triumphantly.

"Rash girl! What benefit do you expect to derive from this? Even assuming you have control here, how could you possibly keep it when I have so many soldiers outside? Aha, tell me that, if you please?"

"Oh, Rajah, you ask too many questions," said she provokingly. "But if you must know, why, I suppose you must, that's all. So, to begin, allow me to say that I hardly expect to oppose your soldiers at all; no, you will command them just as you have. All the difference there will be, it will be unseen, unheard. You see, you will journey southward toward Allahabad, with your army,

but it will be in a *howdah* all by yourself—yes, a prisoner, if you like, for the report shall be spread that you want to be alone—ah, why and for what purpose your coming here, as you have, so much out of your way to meet and decoy me. will evidently inform you better than I, the intended victim, could possibly word it. It should be a pleasant journey to you, for you will be in charge of these”—pointing to her Khattriyas—“who will personate your chiefs and attendants, and issue all mandates for you, or rather, through you for me, it being my intention to accompany you, with my English friends here, until we meet General Havelock, when you and your army shall then be surrendered to him.”

“Ho! But I have already ordered the dispatching of troops who will cut that accursed Feringhee into pieces,” he roared exultingly.

“You refer to the *hulkara* who visited you a little while since?”

“Why, of course. Whom else do you suppose?”

“Ah, Rajah, you are putting too much confidence in that. He, let me tell you, has not departed from here yet—is too much fatigued, as it were, to do so.”

“Ho! What do you mean now?” he snarled.

“Why, just what I say. He has been detained.”

The monster, in the meantime, could do nothing but glare at her savagely, and mutter curses on himself in the impotence of baffled malice. But at length, he burst out, sneeringly:

“Foolish girl! Don’t you suppose I can bribe, too? What will you do with my subordinates

here? Do you think that they won't try to liberate me when they get the chance?"

"Yes, Rajah, I am sure of it; consequently they, and also all others whom I cannot trust implicitly, will have to abide here for the present with the good *thannadar*. Only you and those I have mentioned will go with me to meet Havelock; and if we fail to meet him because of any misadventure to my plans, mark me, I will have matters so arranged that you shall be among the first to perish."

Her voice, as she finished, was cold and stern. It indicated she was resolved to succeed or fail utterly; as much so, even, as were her ancestry of old on her mother's side, when they fought for their lives and liberty—aye, when they struck for their altars and fires at Marathon, Salamis, Thermopylæ and the like.

"You don't trust me very much," moaned the monster, in quavering tones.

"Indeed, why should I? Have not enough of my friends already trusted you to their sorrow?"

"Well, if you refer to the Feringhees collectively, yes, and served them right, too, for they have robbed me, deprived me of my birth-right; but if you mean these whom I have brought you, why, I swear by all the ancient gods that they cannot complain of any ill-treatment from me."

"That may be true, Rajah; but, just the same, you have threatened them here in my presence. Have you forgotten that?"

"Oh, princess," he groaned, "your entrapping me thus isn't fair. Why, if I should now fall into

the hands of the Feringhees, the probabilities are they would show me no mercy."

"Ah, no doubt of it, Rajah; but let me tell you, you would be treated fairly, nevertheless, not perfidiously, as in the case of General Sir Hugh Wheeler and his men. Just keep that in mind, if you please."

"Sorceress! Haven't you any feelings for me at all?" he shrieked, his eyes rolling as if he was already confronted by the spectres of his victims.

Thus was she torturing him, when we were all startled by a strange kind of humming noise, and the next instant shocked almost out of our senses by the huge canopy, suspended over the Nana and his suite, falling to the floor with a loud, resounding crash!

At once all was confusion. The canopy being about three yards high, and long and wide enough for its sides to enclose entirely the dais occupied by the Rajah and his retinue, they were effectually hidden from the sight of everybody in the hall. Consequently there was much shouting and running to and fro by the *thannadar's* men to prevent those concealed making any sudden rush, or unexpected break, for freedom.

Zanee Kooran sent Pyu Yet forward to restore order.

This the giant finally did, and once more quiet prevailed in the hall.

Then, the rest of us looking on with bated breath, he warily stepped up to the canopy and made a slit in its side with his dagger. Springing back, he hailed those hidden (as we supposed) within, and bade them come out. But not a sound,

not even a single response was made. Again he called, and with the same result.

Gliding now around to another side of the canopy, he there made a slit in the silken cloth, and then gave an exclamation of surprise and dismay.

The two holes he had cut admitted light sufficient for him to examine very well the interior, he informed us, and—it was empty; *Nana Sahib and his retinue were nowhere to be seen!*

Again confusion reigned; and this time, I am sorry to say, we Europeans joined in it, the princess included. Everybody, in fact, threw himself upon the canopy. Poor thing, despite its rich carvings, exquisite coverings, silver fixtures and golden ornaments, it was soon reduced to a skeleton—aye, turned over and cast aside, and with it the dais which it had covered; and there, sure enough, was no sign, no trace of the Rajah or any of his suite.

Where could they have disappeared, we asked one another. Ah, where, indeed? Not a door existed in the rear of where the dais had stood, not a passage anywhere, as far as we could see, through which they could have escaped.

Alas, the natives shook their heads and said that it was jugglery, conjury, necromancy; and, really, so fruitless was our search, so unavailing our efforts, we were, for the time being, half inclined to believe them.

However, there were the ropes, which had served to suspend the canopy, by their passing through pulleys attached to the ceiling for the purpose, to dispel this theory. These had been severed close to the rings in the floor where they were fastened,

thus giving us ample proof that the person who did it must have been instrumental in spiriting them all away, himself included, else he would never have resorted to an act otherwise so foolish, so rash. But in what manner? By what means? That was the question.

"Majub, do you think it was magic?" asked Zanee Kooran.

"No, princess," he answered.

"Well, what do you think it was?" she inquired.

"O princess, I can hardly say. If anything, though, I should ascribe it to a hidden passage, accessible by means of some secret door or movable panel."

"Good *thannadar*, do you suppose such a thing could exist here?" she asked.

"I don't know, princess, but there might, for the place is very old—was built, in fact, when mystery as much as massiveness contributed to security and defense."

"Then bring axes, picks, sledges, crow-bars—anything you have in those lines—to rip up the floor and tear down the wall with," said the colonel, to the *thannadar*, authoritatively; and from that time on, allow me to say, he exercised chief command in the citadel, and that to the complete satisfaction of every one there.

While preparations were being made to ascertain how Nana Sahib and his court had managed to spirit themselves away, Zanee Kooran, with Verona Winslow and Lillian Richerson, dropped quietly out of the crowd and went away together through a door on the inner side of the hall.

Therefore, having not yet greeted, nor been

greeted by the beautiful Begaum, and dying, as it were, to fold her in my arms and to hear what news she brought—if the people at Benares were safe and well, and, above all, to learn if there were any letters for me from father, I, too, stole away at an opportune moment and, with a wildly beating heart, hurried off in quest of my betrothed.

Reaching the door through which she, with my friends' wives, had passed, I found myself in a narrow passage—a sort of an ante-chamber, and here came face to face with the elder of her ayahs, who forthwith accosted me as follows:

“Ah, I am so glad the sahib has come; the princess wants very much to see him. If he will only wait here just a minute, she will be with him.” And, gliding nimbly away, she darted into an apartment at the further end of the entry, whence issued the sounds of conversation.

Another minute, and oh, the form of her who was as dear to me as my own life, gladdened the way; and, we each hastening toward the other, she was immediately clasped in my arms in silent ecstasy. The joy, the thankfulness, the unspeakable gratification at our being again united, precluded between us both the power of speech. Indeed, I was so exalted I could only press her to me the closer, the more tenderly, she the while nestling in my embrace like an exhausted dove; but her eyes, which looked straight into mine, shone with a gratefulness that seemed to partake of something else than earth.

“Oh, my love, my darling!” I finally managed to murmur; “what made you take the risk of venturing up into this accursed region?”

"Because, dearest, I was the one, practically, who got *you* here. Do you think, therefore, that I could leave you, my only hope, my sole joy, to your fate?"

"But, darling, judging from the experiences my friends and I had in coming up the Ganges, I don't see how you ever managed to get here."

"Ah, Henry, money will do wonders. And then, if you only knew the doubts and fears I have had, the heartaches and yearnings I have suffered since learning of your danger, you would begin to understand, perhaps, that my coming has been a comfort, a relief to me."

"Ah, princess, we have all suffered," I said, "and many, alas, are dead. But, thanks to God, and to you, the colonel, Charlie, Lillian, Verona and I have thus far been preserved from every harm."

"Yes, Henry; but not from the ravages of Father Time. See! Even your locks are besprinkled with gray; but, dear boy, I feel prouder than ever of you by reason of them, for I know they belong to a hero."

"Then, perhaps, they will be fit subjects, after all, to associate with those of a heroine," I said smilingly; and taking in hand some of her own raven tresses, I kissed them reverently.

"But, darling, there have probably been some trying times for you other than thinking and working entirely for us. Is it not so?" I asked, to change the subject.

"Yes, Henry, there have been," she replied. "Indeed, I feared at one time the Sepoys would have undisputed sway in Benares." And then she

proceeded to tell me, briefly, about the revolt that had occurred there on the 4th of June, and how quickly and efficiently Colonel Neill, with the assistance, chiefly, of two hundred Madras Fusileers, had put it down.

"It was from those brave Fusileers," she added, with a smile, "whom you and your friends sent back, that I obtained my first knowledge of your awful plight."

She then told me of her hurried preparations to rescue us, if possible, since she had calculated from the first that Nana Sahib would overcome General Wheeler, and how she had been baffled and delayed on the journey, especially on arriving at Allahabad.

There the revolt, she said, had been terrible. While the European soldiery had succeeded in defending the fort, the mutineers had ravaged the town at will and reduced it almost to a heap of ruins; they had also put the inhabitants to death unsparingly, and alas, in many cases with the most fiendish cruelty.

At last she had reached Culpeedah, the point she had had in view, won the *thannadar* and his men, by whom she had found it garrisoned, over to her side, and was just in time to make negotiations with Nana Sahib, whereby my friends and I were saved from the wanton massacre at Cawnpore.

"Would you really have given the monster a million of pounds, as you made him think you would?" I asked, when she had finished.

"Willingly, Henry, had I known it would have been of any use. But I knew it was not, and so—I intended to give him nothing; that paper I made

so much of was worthless, a fraud. I employed it simply to lead him on the better in attaining my own ends; and that it served its purpose, my getting you and your friends out of his hands, testifies.

"But, Henry, here is a letter for you. It came the day before I left home, and it is, I think, from Sir Edgerton Clermonte. At any rate, it bears his superscription."

A letter from home? Oh, how my heart leaped with joy!

It was, indeed, my father's handwriting. I recognized it instantly.

With trembling fingers, I tore open the epistle, and then, with one arm about Zanee Kooran, read it aloud.

It was a better letter than I had ever expected to get; it was kind even, and best of all abounded in parental love.

What afforded me greater relief than anything else, though, it contained no allusions whatever to Lady Katharine, Lord Listerton's daughter, but, on the contrary, expressed much concern about the wonderfully angelic being—the "priceless pearl" I had found in the East, which caused her at my side to blush not a little, and reprove me with many a melting glance.

"But what means those conflicting reports I hear about a rebellion? Is there really going to be trouble?" it asked.

"Oh, my son," it read in another place, "if you and your princess were only here to share with me my comforts and good health, how content, how happy I should be! I know I shall like her—

Zanee Kooran—ah, what a unique and pretty name—and, as you are well aware, it has been my aim to see you properly settled for the past several years.

“It warms my old heart, indeed, to hear you are quitting yourself so creditably. I think you owe much to the colonel of your old regiment, and though I once felt like cursing him right roundly for robbing me so of my only son, you may tell him, if you will, that my house from now on is always open to him; thanks to him, I no longer fear, should trouble occur with the natives, of your not being able to conduct yourself in a manner justifiable of every Clermonte.”

The thorn of pride, you see, was rooted as deeply as ever in his breast.

“And now, Henry, my boy,” he wrote, “I, too, am about starting for India, on an important mission from the Queen. It is business connected with this present trouble, and will eventually take me into those regions where you are stationed, so that sooner or later we may meet. Hence, till then may the blessings of God attend you, and also her whom you extol so highly.”

There were tears in Zanée Kooran’s eyes as I finished.

“The good, noble man,” she said, drawing closer to me; “I know I shall love him. His very letter convinces me of it. It has been the potent charm which has brought us two safely together, I do believe. And now——”

Further speech with her was cut short by tremendous shouting. First, a babel of voices arose in the audience chamber, proclaiming that there some

~~land~~ of discovery had been made; and these were accompanied by cries from the outside—cries which were full of import and, as we were to learn, well might be.

CHAPTER XVI.

'MID DOUBTS AND FEARS.

A FULL minute Zanee Kooran and I stood still, listening to those shouts with bated breath, our arms twined about one another, not unlike a pair of frightened children. Then——

“Oh, Henry! What can it mean?” she whispered.

“It is more than I can conceive, dearest,” I answered, in tones equally subdued. “Had I better go and investigate?”

Before she could make a reply, there was a rustle behind us, and the next moment we were both overshadowed by the broad shoulders of Pyu Yet, who straightway informed us that “Majub was right.”

“There is a hidden passage,” he said, “and the Captain Sahib Winslow has gone down with a party to explore it. A panel corresponding exactly with the wall there back of where the *gadi* was, gives you admission to it, and it has an opening outside somewhere. The Rajah and his retinue escaped by it, at any rate; we know they have, for now the Sepoys are being drawn up to attack us. Ho! Don’t you hear them shout?”

“Escaped—the Nana has escaped? Dear me!”

lamented the princess, her lips quivering, her eyelids trembling. "I had planned his capture with such painstaking—was so confident I could present him a prisoner to Havelock!"

"My poor darling!" I murmured, caressing her perfumed locks mechanically, as if I could thus allay her disappointment; "I wish you might have been successful, for many lives, no doubt, would then be spared."

"Ah, I am sure of it," she said; "and now—now the Rajah will be more vindictive than ever. My God, Henry! Think of the poor creatures in his power at Cawnpore. What if he should——"

"Great heavens, princess! Don't say it. Don't!" I cried, recalling with horror the picture of Sir Hugh Wheeler and his men in their last agonies. "The wretch! The monster! He would not dare——"

"Pardon me, Henry, but I believe—alas! I am positive that he would. Oh, I tell you you don't know, not even now, what a demon that man is; and you can't begin to think how thankful I am that you and your friends are out of his clutches."

"Your own sweet self included," I added, with a shudder. "But, my love, now that he is at liberty again, we must make the best of it, and endeavor to protect ourselves. He will probably strain every nerve to recapture my friends and me, and above all get possession of you. Therefore, to come to the point, do you think that we can stave him off until——"

"Until Havelock comes? Yes, Henry, I think we can," she said, brightening; "certainly, if he doesn't attack us with artillery."

"O princess, he has no big guns now," spoke up Pyu Yet, who stood at a little distance from us, with folded arms and a meditative air, as if quite unconscious that there was a pair of foolish lovers before him.

"Good," exclaimed Zanee Kooran. "As long as that continues we shall be able to hold out fairly well.

"You see, my dear Henry, the two hundred and eighty odd men whom the *thannadar* commands here, are all reasonably brave and very good marksmen; the artillerists are especially to be relied upon, for most of them were drilled at Cawnpore.

"Oh, you needn't be alarmed," she hastily added; "these didn't participate in the siege. I know they didn't, for they proved it to me. The fact is, I don't believe there is one here who fought against Wheeler and the rest of you."

"Well, I am thankful to hear that," I said; "they will be more likely in that case to stand by us better."

"The citadel, you see, is practically in the hands of my own Khattriyas, and their fidelity is above being questioned; I would trust them anywhere. Moreover, every one of the *thannadar's* men, while serving me, receives princely pay, and they all know that the quarters here are quite secure. They are also comfortable; I looked to that when I first arrived. To be on the safe side in case I did fail in capturing the Nana—as, alas, it seems I have—I ordered at once plenty of food, arms, ammunition and the like to be collected here. I would have had horses and elephants, too, but to

get them was simply out of the question. Indeed, so turbulent were most of the districts when I came up the river, I had to resort to boats more than half the time; and on arriving here I found the situation worse, if anything, than at any other place.

"To return to the subject, however, we have a strong position here, and are exceedingly well provided for, there being a durable well, sunk through the solid rock, which is sure to supply us with all the water we shall need. Why, then, worry about the Nana, if he has escaped? He cannot harm us—at least, not right away, and perhaps Havelock will come before he reduces us to sore straits."

"But what makes you think that he will come, dear?"

"Why, Henry, because the matter was being arranged when I left home, my informer, Colonel Neill, not knowing but he should have an opportunity to accompany the expedition. And then, didn't you notice the remarks Nana Sahib made after reading that message the *hulkara* brought him?"

"My darling, to be sure I did; also, the adroitness with which you parried his questions," said I, embracing her gently, and getting in requital—ah, what a ravishing smile! "And perhaps you learned how large a force Havelock was to have," I resumed, after we had become somewhat composed, "and of what regiments it would consist?"

"No, I did not," she replied, regretfully; "the fact is, I am not quite sure that had been an-

nounced yet. But I believe that there will be enough to force their way up here.

"Henry, now that I think of it, there *was* some mention made about the Seventy-eighth Highlanders. Oh, don't fear about it's not being an adequate force."

"Ah, let the captain sahib wait until the Sepoys have attacked us; then he will see how we can beat them off," exclaimed Pyu Yet at this juncture enthusiastically.

Suddenly the report of a rifle rang out.

"Ho! The attack is beginning," he cried, combing his beard with his fingers very fast; "the attack is beginning. Would the captain sahib like to see it? Let him follow me, then, and he shall."

"Yes, go if you want to," Zanee Kooran responded to my questioning glance. "But, oh! be careful, Henry, not to expose yourself unnecessarily. Should any accident befall you now, it—it would kill me."

"O princess, have no fears for the sahib; your servant will watch over and, if need be, protect him as once he protected his little Krishuna," Pyu Yet hastened to assure her, with a low salaam.

"Ah, Pyu Yet, I know you will; but I pray such service may never be required of you," she said. And then, having taken a tender farewell of me, she went to rejoin Verona and Lillian, while I turned, reluctantly, to follow the giant.

The place to which he conducted me was a watch-tower, or turret, surmounting the dome of the middle structure.

From here a grand view indeed of our surroundings could be had. Not only could we look

down into the yard protected by the rampart below, but off on the plain around, and in such a manner that both seemed almost to lie at our feet.

There, far out on the plain, the Sepoys were drawn up in line after line, file after file, forming a column very much longer than broad—a deployment necessitated by the narrowness of the slope up which they must come to reach us, and for which reason only a part, a very small part, in comparison with their numbers, could engage us hand-to-hand at any one time.

They presented an imposing spectacle, nevertheless, their gaudy uniforms and banners and glint of weapons showing grandly in the noonday sun. Moreover, they were shouting in a manner meant to strike terror to the stoutest-hearted, and really if it had not been for that massive wall round the court-yard, I should have felt not a little concerned for our safety.

This, you see, was about seven foot thick at the base, and (outside measurement) from eight to ten foot high. The top was provided with numerous loop-holes and embrasures, and these, owing to the sharp incline of the slope, were almost on a level with the surface of the yard. Hence, access to them there was very easy, even with cannon; but on the other side—the side where the enemy must come, it was exceedingly difficult to reach them.

And cannon there were, of small calibre, in plenty, trained so as to sweep every inch of the slope up which the enemy must come; and evidently they were loaded, for beside them stood the artillerymen ready.

Riflemen were, of course, stationed the whole length of the rampart, to do their part when the proper time should arrive; and since there were not loop-holes and embrasures enough for all, banquettes had been constructed between them, on to which almost any amount of men could leap, rise up, give the Sepoys a volley, crouch down behind the wall and, having exchanged their empty muskets for loaded ones from their friends in the yard, repeat the whole over again, in case the enemy came too close.

There were also men in the round towers, and in the balconies under the projecting roofs of the domes, watching the foe with carbines in their hands; some of these, even, were already trying their marksmanship, and as a result several of the distant Sepoys had been seen to fall.

Therefore, Nana Sahib, or whoever was in command, deliberated no longer, but sounded the onset. At any rate, we heard a bugle, and forthwith the head of the column, with a prolonged howl, shot toward us, like an angry serpent.

What induced them to make such a foolish attack, I never learned. Perhaps they thought, though, to surprise us, and thus overpower us. Had it been the *thannadar* and his men alone against whom they were contending, there was a possibility that they might have done something. But, unfortunately for them, the colonel now had charge of the citadel, and this, together with their great love for Zanee Kooran, made the natives under him fight with nearly as much courage and desperation as Sir Hugh Wheeler's veterans had. The

attack, therefore, was repulsed with comparative ease.

Astonished, confused, demoralized, the Sepoys in the forefront became panic-stricken, and, howling in their terror, could no longer be controlled. Indeed, they turned and fled like madmen. Accordingly they spread consternation among the ranks pressing on from the rear; for these, not understanding the cause of so much confusion—the smoke of battle now enveloped everything before them as effectively as a thick fog—thought that the garrison was making a sortie, or else an unforeseen force had come to its aid, and joined in the flight. Therefore, the whole army, greatly to our delight, soon broke and fell back till even out of range of our artillery.

Thus ended the first attempt of the Sepoys to carry the ramparts of Culpeedah by storm; and while we suffered from it not the loss of a single man killed, and but three slightly wounded, their dead and disabled strewed the face of the hill to the amount of nearly three hundred.

We were invested without any aggression being made by either side for about three days.

The only thing we had to console us through it all, was the knowledge that Havelock was surely advancing to our relief. We ascertained this by sending out spies after nightfall, who, stealing into the Sepoy camp, mingled freely with the mutineers and, after gleaning from them all the news to be obtained, would work their way back again, before daybreak, into the fortress.

Indeed, it was thus we learned on the night of July 12th, or, more properly speaking, on the

morning of the 13th, how a big battle was impending—aye, had probably been fought before this time, near Futtehpore.

There Havelock must meet fifteen hundred Sepoys, as many Oude tribesmen, and five hundred cavalry, with twelve guns; and that the Feringhees had all been cut to pieces the mutineers were positive, it being a position, they said, that a thousand men could hold against ten thousand, since the only way it could be reached was by passing along a road that led through a swamp. Furthermore, there was but one British regiment of the line, one of the “plumed regiments with bare legs” (which meant, of course, the gallant Highlanders), and one of the white Madras regiments, with a few guns, and a very few horsemen.

And now—now, pretty soon, they were going to subjugate us. Big guns for the purpose were already *en route* from Cawnpore, and when once these arrived and were put into position—“Ho! They would show us what they could do.”

There was great rejoicing in their camp just before daybreak that morning, and supposing it originated from their anticipated successes, we gave it little concern.

But when daylight came at last, we were confronted with a danger that made us tremble indeed. It awakened us to the fact that the Sepoys’ boasting and elation had not been so vain, after all.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE WORST APPARENT.

THIS was the sword of Damocles we found menacing us on that morning.

Four large guns—long twenty-four pounders—were arranged for firing upon us, just as I had foreseen, from the crest of a hill next to us on the southeast. They had in all probability arrived from Cawnpore and been hauled up there after the return of our spies; and now, as a protection for them, a breast-work had been built of the stones and rock with which the hill was strewed, and this strengthened in front with sandbags. It was, in truth, a regular battery, and practically had us at its mercy; and as the colonel, Charlie and I gazed at it from a banquette of the rampart, on that side of the fortress, surprised, annoyed, dismayed, the captain said:

“Gad, I guess the rascals ’ll do something now.”

“It rather looks that way,” said I. “Yes, Charlie, I fear they have got us foul.”

“Havelock had better hurry up, then,” he continued, grimly.

“But,” said I, “according to our spies’ report—that is, the Sepoys’ story—he’ll never see this region at all.”

"Great powers! You don't put any faith in that, do you?" asked the colonel.

"Does my appearance indicate that I do?" I inquired, with a smile.

"Ah, Henry, I might have known that you didn't," he replied, good-humoredly.

"Gad, Sir Henry Havelock isn't the man, I say, to be captured, or conquered, by a Sepoy host in an open field."

"I agree with you, Charlie," said our superior; "and judging from that, what do you think—that he will allow himself to be delayed by one long?"

"No, sir; not for a moment," came the quick response.

"I, either," the colonel replied. "No, I believe he will put forth every effort to get here as soon as possible; the lives of so many innocent ones being imperiled, if nothing more, would prompt him to do that."

By this he referred, of course, to the captives of Nana Sahib. And how did we know that Havelock was aware of their imprisonment at Cawnpore? Ah, we did not know; but we hoped—we trusted he might from the fact that Zanée Kooran, attending her arrival here, had in due time secretly dispatched some swift couriers down the river with an account of it, who, if no accidents had befallen them, must have arrived ere this at Allahabad, or below.

"Well, it's to be prayed for that we receive succor of some kind, and receive it soon," said I. "These walls, I want to remind you—and, understand, I have inspected them—do not possess qualities warranting them to endure punishment like

Gibraltar. The cement in them has lost its virtue and loosened up too much for that."

"True," put in Charlie, with a sigh. "And—gad! the worst of it is, it is from up there that we are going to experience our first trouble and—perhaps our last, unless we all do lots of ducking," pointing, as he spoke, to the stately domes above us. "You know it, of course?"

"Certainly," I replied.

"Well, I'm ashamed to acknowledge it, but I did not," said the colonel, in surprise; "I supposed they were in good condition. However, they have received but little attention from me further than my ascertaining that they are well supported on the inside with masonry and timbers.

"Hi, Henry! What do you say to taking charge of the nine-pounder here and treating them with a counter-surprise? It will be perfectly justifiable—don't you think so, Captain Winslow?"

"Certainly, my dear colonel. Gad, a guinea on it, though, that Captain Clermonte can't reach them to any effect with the first shot."

"Charlie, I'll take you up on that," I replied.

"All right; and let the colonel be judge?"

"Ye—es. I'll do that, too," I answered, being now thoroughly aroused.

Assisted by a Hindu artilleryman, I took extra pains to load the gun I was to use accurately, and likewise sight it, albeit the latter had to be done right in the face of the sun, which was now balanced like a ball of fire on the edge of the eastern horizon.

I resorted to a time-fuse shrapnel shell, believing I could gauge it so that it would explode,

provided no accident befell it, and everything went off all right, near enough to the Sepoys to frighten them at least; I had small hopes, you see, of hitting them. Greatly to my surprise, however, and vastly to my satisfaction, even joy—for brutality, alas, is one of the chief characteristics of war—it burst directly over the spot where a number of them gathered, showering its contents on to them like a thunderbolt.

“You rogue!” shouted Charlie, from the banquettes; “I didn’t say anything about your knocking over a half dozen of them. One would have been sufficient.”

“Don’t mind him, Henry,” vociferated the colonel in jubilant tones. “You have won the wager fairly and squarely, and, great powers! You shall have it.”

Meantime, the *thannadar* and those of his men who had witnessed my good luck, showed their appreciation of it as a good omen by giving such lusty cheers they made the very stones in the rampart vibrate.

We expected them to open fire upon us; but no, they did not, and why, we were unable to solve. Satisfactory as had been the results of my shot, it was impossible for it to have silenced a whole battery.

What did it mean? Ah, a look-out in the watch-tower of the middle structure suddenly called down to us that he had just caught sight of a party of about two hundred Sepoys coming from the north with six cannon, to which elephants were attached, while, in the rear, were three ammunition wagons, drawn by oxen.

"Gad, it promises to be a bigger affair than I thought for," said Charlie, bitterly.

"Oh, the Nana has got to keep up his reputation for making a show," I remarked, with a dry laugh.

"Well, boys, we know now why these rascals over here don't fire on us," the colonel spoke up; "they are biding their time. But—great powers! If I see how we can help it. So let's do the next best thing—namely, go and get something to eat while we've got the chance; we won't be sorry, for pretty soon we shall have our hands full of work."

Thus reminded of it, we found we *were* hungry. Accordingly, arm-in-arm, we set out for the little square marble-lined apartment adjoining the grand entrance of the middle structure, for this we had appropriated for our dining-room.

Here, to our surprise, we were received by Verona and Lillian with an enthusiasm staunch as that which had characterized them both so beautifully in the siege of Cawnpore, when they were caring for the sick and wounded. Really, the captain and colonel had each of them cause to be proud of his wife.

Zanee Kooran was also there, and she greeted us with a warmth so gentle, so great, it bespoke volumes of happiness yet to come.

Made of teak wood, exquisitely carved, and so hard with age that it would turn the sharpest knife, the table was covered with a cloth of pure white damask, on which rested gold and silver plate, china of finest make and mould, and crystal that gleamed in the sunlight like precious stones; and these, in turn, were filled with viands

of equal quality—that is, as far as our having been cut off from outside supplies for three days permitted.

Rice in various forms, was there; bread, white and flaky as new-fallen snow on the highest Himalayas; curries, together with chutney and Bombay duck, as it is called (a little fish about the size of a smelt, which, on account of its being cut open, dried and smoked with assafoetida, has an intolerably disagreeable taste to strangers, but relished, nevertheless, by my friends and me, as is the case with nearly all Anglo-Indians once they have become accustomed to it), plantains sliced and fried, and fruits (some preserved in sugar), as grapes, plums, figs, dates, bananas, cherries, pomegranates, and watermelons; also, a few freshly roasted Cashew nuts, with tea, coffee and the like in abundance.

Before we sat down to this, at the princess's request, we knelt with her there, and fervently united in asking strength and guidance for the dark, uncertain days to come.

Then, after we were all seated, she told us that she had just assumed, through her servant, Pyu Yet, the responsibility of giving Koambux and his followers—the subahdar and escort who had presented my friends and me to Nana Sahib in the audience chamber, and whom we had held prisoners up to this time—permission to take part in the defense.

“They begged it of me,” she said, “declaring that they now dread to go back to the Rajah under any condition, lest he in his disappointment and rage should inflict upon them some terrible pun-

ishment, and perhaps put them to death. I hope, my friends, you don't disapprove of what I have done?"

Ah, how could we? Moreover, we were influenced in favor of these men from the fact that they had treated us kindly while our captors, though that, of course, was probably due to the Nana's orders. But it would—it could do no harm to give them a trial; if they were not friendly disposed toward us, the *thannadar's* soldiers, whom we knew we could trust, would soon find it out for us.

"They will prove faithful, unless I am greatly mistaken," said Zanee Kooran, and, as it turned out, they did.

"What of our situation now?" asked the princess. "Do you think we can hold out until Havelock comes?"

"I don't know," replied the colonel.

"The Sepoys are going to fire upon us with artillery—long, heavy siege-guns—are they not?"

"Alas, princess, we fear so," said I.

"Well, I have expected it," she continued; "yes, I have expected it, and greatly regret that we possess no better means than we do of resisting them in that line. We shall have to remain, for all I see, where it is safest and let them bombard us; then, when they attempt to storm the ramparts—as they sooner or later will—spring out and try to beat them off. In that way we may be able to hold out for several days; and if we can, we shall be saved. For if Havelock was at Futteh-pore yesterday, he certainly should get here by the day after to-morrow. And I tell you what we

will do; we will dispatch some swift messengers to-night, to hurry him up."

"A good idea," exclaimed the colonel, "though I don't think he will need much prompting."

"That may be," she said; "but it is a precaution that will do no harm. You see, the Sepoys may try to draw his course away from here, and in that case it might do us a world of good."

When the meal was finished, we officers went out and ascended the long winding staircase leading to the turret above, to see what news we could learn of the enemy's guns which were *en route* from the north. We found them to be long twenty-pounders, like those trained on us upon the southeast, and the Sepoys, having now approached with them as near as they dared to the citadel, were busy unlimbering and getting them into position for business.

They did not send in a demand for surrender—they knew well enough, no doubt, that it would have been peremptorily refused—but, at last having everything in order, they suddenly opened the expected bombardment with a tremendous crash.

To this we replied for a while with our lighter ordnance, but, after losing several of our best gunners, and having as yet inflicted no material loss on the enemy, gave it up, and sought shelter inside the main structures. There was no other course left us. Notwithstanding our superior height, we could not even silence that battery on the hill, much less the one on the north; and to stay in the court-yard long at any point, was to court death to no purpose from cannon-balls and

falling stones. As a matter of fact, a whole mass of masonry would occasionally give way and, tumbling down with a thundering roar, jar the citadel like an earthquake. Moreover, just as Captain Winslow and I had predicted, the roofing on the domes was knocked off very fast, and this, in falling, added not a little to the general noise and confusion. We were half-blinded by the thick dust.

Fresh guns were added to the battery on the north. The constant hail of shot rained upon us incessantly night and day, and grew daily more terrific. In point of truth the only thing that saved us from having the fortress completely battered down, was its elevation above the plain. The enemy tried on several different occasions to steal up under cover of their own fire and carry the ramparts by surprise. Hence we had to be ever on the alert, and in repelling one of these attacks, Captain Winslow received a grievous scalp wound from a fragment of granite.

Inside the fortress there was no peace for us. As the bombardment progressed, many of the fiery missiles that struck the walls would pass through the windows or loop-holes, and often we had to carry up water to extinguish the fires thus started.

But through the ever-present danger, we remained unshaken in our determination to hold out as long as possible, and, for inflexibility of will and dauntlessness of spirit in so doing, none towered higher among us than Zanee Kooran. She took part with unabating zeal in the work of defense, and inspired the *thannadar's* men as, I am sure, no one else could have done.

We maintained our position with dogged resistance, through what seemed an endless period of war and tumult, until the morning of July 16th, when, a little after sunrise, the roaring of the enemy's guns somewhat slackened, and then, to our surprise, about noon ceased altogether.

This brought on an ominous silence, for, although there was much activity in the Sepoy camp, it *was* silence to us, and we accordingly all drew breath, almost daring to hope for a space of rest; also, that Havelock might be coming. We looked eagerly for him and his army now, this being the day when he should arrive.

Strain our aching eyes as much as we would, however, he was nowhere to be seen. Doubt and anguish seized us, therefore, and when, a little after noon, we saw the mutineers begin to mass out on the plain to the north, our anxiety changed to terror. We now perceived that they were going to storm the ramparts, and it did not seem probable to us they would attempt that if Havelock was close at hand. We were at last face to face with the time when we must make a desperate defense—aye, the defense of our lives.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"TO THE SKIRL OF THE PIPERS' PLAYING."

THE next half hour was a busy one with us. There was much to do, no time to do it in, and above all no artillery to rely upon, every gun having been dismantled by the fallen masonry, which choked the court-yard around, on every side, as far as the eye could reach.

But, for that matter, the whole fortress presented a sad spectacle. Nearly all the metallic roofing had been torn off the three great domes, and owing to the hill battery on the southeast, the watch-tower of the middle structure no longer stood; only the foundation to it was left, and that looked like the stump of a broken mainmast on a wrecked vessel. Most of the round towers on the north side were also gone, and all the wooden balconies there either burned or knocked away. In some places nothing was standing but the jagged walls.

As to the ramparts, they had suffered even more severely. Those facing the southeast were completely demolished, and the walls back of them so badly battered that it was only a question of time,

should the bombardment be resumed, when the apartments in the line of fire, which were used to quarter some of the *thannadar's* soldiers in, would have to be abandoned.

On the north side the gates had also been shivered into splinters and finally burned, and to the right of them yawned a breach in the rampart practicable for assault. Now that the critical moment so long waited for was at hand, we prepared as best we could, to occupy every nook and cranny offered us, from which a musket could be fired, and for disputing that gap in the rampart and the broken gateway, we constructed crude breast-works which, when completed, extended in the form of a crescent, some twenty feet or more back, behind each of the apertures.

We brought out grenades and canisters to throw at the enemy—no desirable things to encounter, especially the canisters, which were filled to the mouth with powder and balls, we having prepared these beforehand for emergency, their manipulation depending on a short fuse attached, and cords fastened round them, by means of which they could be pitched a considerable distance from such elevated positions as the uppermost part of the fortress afforded.

Just now a vague hope had sprung up in our hearts that we might yet be saved.

The Sepoys were acting strangely. By aid of the glass we saw the officers were haranguing the privates, and all seemed to be greatly alarmed.

The colonel and I, in company with Koambux, stood on a projection of the walls above the grand entrance of the middle edifice, where we had

climbed, at the risk of our lives, to see if we could ascertain the cause of the enemy's unaccountable behavior. We were suddenly startled by a dull distant sound, it being followed by another, and still another.

"Cannon! Cannon!" cried the colonel.

"Ho! They *are* big guns," corroborated the *subahdar*.

"Yes, that is artillery; unquestionably it is," said I, in quavering tones. "There must be a battle in progress somewhere. That explains the enemy's conduct. Havelock is coming, and they know it, and—" But my companions, I found, were no longer listening to me; instead they were shouting the glad tidings to our friends in the court-yard.

There was an outburst of cheers, and then another and another, and next I caught the words, "Ho! See the captain sahib. See him, see him! May Brahma will it to protect him hereafter from every harm!"

Finding this enthusiasm was directed to some one we could not see, we scrambled down, and there, in the grand entranceway of the middle structure, saw Charlie Winslow!

His head was swathed with a bandage, for he had far from recovered from the effects of his hurt; but the light of battle shone in his eye, and he had buckled on the belt containing his sword and revolvers, while in his hand he grasped an Enfield.

"Hey, colonel! Where do you want me?" he asked, grimly, when the ovation given him had somewhat subsided.

"Great powers! Back from whence you came," said Richerson, with vehemence.

"Gad, colonel, not much; I'm here to fight. No, no more of that dark hole for me—at least, not at present. So where shall I post myself, I say—down there at the gateway, or up on the walls and oversee the throwing of the canisters?"

"Oh, if you're *bound* to stay, Charlie, up there by all odds. The fact is, that is just where we need a cool head and trusty hand. But—great powers! Are you not afraid you'll fall and break your neck?"

"Gad, I could climb the Rock of Ages to get one more whack at the rascals. But, look out, now; look out, I say, for here they come!"

"Ha! Every man to his post," shouted the colonel; and forthwith he, with the *thannadar* and Majub the juggler, took charge of the defense at the breach in the rampart, while Pyu Yet and I assumed command of those at the ruined gate, Koambux, in the meantime, assisting Captain Winslow up to the position assigned him.

Then, in stern silence, we awaited the approach of the enemy, who were now swarming about the foot of the hill in a dense mass, those in the rear urging the foremost on with wild shouts and a great beating of drums.

Being brought to a halt, since only a few of them in comparison with their numbers could ascend the narrow neck-like surface of the slope at a time, the main body spread out on the plain and opened such a tremendous fusillade that the bullets pattered against the walls of the ramparts and the central structures, like rain. Indeed, volley after

volley succeeded the other so rapidly, it was not long before the mutineers were enveloped in a perfect cloud of smoke from their own muskets. Whereupon a series of frightful yells rang out close at hand, and we knew they were nearing the ramparts.

The first to face us was a detachment of Sepoys, who, by the uniforms they wore, had belonged to the Fifty-sixth Regiment of Native Infantry, which had been stationed at Cawnpore. These were followed by tribemen—mostly Mussulmans of the Oude.

Tumultuously—aye, like a tidal wave that rolled, they rose, and we allowed them, it being our purpose to have them get as close as possible before we tried to check them with a single shot.

Our silence must have awed them with a sense of unknown danger. At any rate, when about thirty paces off they halted, and the Sepoys delivered a volley. Then, encouraged, as it seemed, by their own noise, and also urged on by their officers and those in the rear of them, they again sprang forward—this time with fixed bayonets.

Now it was that the colonel gave the blast with his bugle, so that ere any of them had reached the lower edge of the rampart, a dozen dark objects sailed down over our heads, like vultures, and landed in the midst of them.

Instantly there rose such a howling as I never had heard. Finding themselves in a trap, as it were, the Sepoys desired to retreat, but pushed on from behind, could not. Consequently they perished on the spot, for those not killed outright by the exploding of the canisters and grenades, were

cut down by the on-coming Mussulmans, who were very courageous and fierce.

We opened fire from the loop-holes in the rampart, and as our friends on the walls above us continued their good work of throwing canisters, the havoc we wrought among our assailants was frightful; whole lines were annihilated at once.

Still, fast as those in front fell, others climbed up from below, and, gaining a foothold on the quivering bodies of the dead and dying, leaped toward us as if possessed and maddened with supernatural fury. Therefore, the greatest gaps made by us in that swarming multitude of humanity were hardly perceptible, and despite our every effort to the contrary, the foe came nearer.

Also did the smoke from the exploded canisters impede us in firing with such accuracy as we had at first, and, supported by a fresh body of Sepoys, the enemy suddenly carried the gateway, crowding into the court-yard before our breast-work, until it was jammed full of men.

Up to this period I had trembled for the constancy of the *thannadar's* soldiers, notwithstanding they had all displayed thus far remarkable coolness and presence of mind. Greatly to my joy, however, they still remained firm, and best of all fought like demons, just as the natives of India will when driven into a place from which there is no possible escape. Added to this, they needed but little attention or encouragement, those whom I had placed in reserve back of the breast-work, now rising up without a word of command and pouring into the dense mass before them a wither-

ing fire. Indeed, every shot told, and most of them twice, if not three times.

The survivors, blackened with soot and dirt and covered with blood, only gnashed their teeth and pressed forward more fiercely. Regardless of death or wounds, they surged upon us like the swell of an angry sea, and in another moment were engaging us hand-to-hand over the breast-work.

Then it was a prodigious din arose. The breach in the rampart having been rushed at about the same time the gateway had, the colonel, in endeavoring to hold that, was undergoing experiences similar to my own. Therefore, commands could no longer be heard; they were instantly drowned in the terrible uproar which merged all sounds, as the crash of canisters, the groans of the wounded, the shrieks of the dying, the sharp incessant crack of the revolvers, the hissing of grenades, the clash of steel against steel, and the shouts and imprecations.

In spite of all we were unable to check the fanatical rush of the enemy. As fast as we cut those down in front, fresh ones leaped up to take their places, and soon there was a wall of dead bodies before us in the court-yard higher than our breast-work. Moreover, now that we were so occupied there, less opposition had we to offer those pressing up the hill on the outside. Hence, through that gateway poured our assailants like an irresistible torrent.

The rest of the fight I remember but vaguely. Laboring wildly, savagely, desperately, despairingly with our men, Pyu Yet and I oscillated back and forth, as it were, among the *débris* back of our

breast-work, in a line, so called, which grew thinner and thinner, frailer and frailer, weaker and weaker. Strange lights now danced before my eyes, and I became insensible to the piles of corpses, groans, cries, unearthly sounds, terror, madness, chaos, around me, further than that the horror of it all intoxicated me, delighted me. Also, that the harder I could smite and the greater number kill, the more I enjoyed it; and in darting here and there, and everywhere, for that matter, I seemed rather to float than walk.

Suddenly I felt a great oppression come over me. I could scarcely breathe, and my sight failed me my limbs refused to support me, and—ah! could it be true?—I lay prostrate—helpless—aye, dead for aught I knew.

When I regained consciousness, I became aware of some one's supporting me in his arms, and next, that there was tremendous cheering. There was no longer any strife around me; no roar of battle in the air, but rather a strange, weird noise which rose and fell with the rhythm and sweetness of a lullaby.

"What is it?" I asked, after listening without being able to comprehend things.

"The captain sahib lives. He lives!" shouted Pyu Yet, for he, I found, it was who was holding me.

"Live? Why, of course I do," I exclaimed, jumping to my feet.

"Oh, better and better!" he cried, dancing about me and swinging his huge blood-stained arms grotesquely.

"Why, what is the matter with you, have you turned fakir?" I asked, looking at him in amazement. "And say, where is the enemy?"

"Gone, sahib; gone. And, oh, we are saved. You are saved; the princess is saved; I am saved; we are all saved, I tell you, for the 'plumed regiment with bare legs' is here. Ho! Don't you hear their little god squeal?"

I recognized immediately in that remarkable sound, which had suddenly grown louder and shriller, "The Campbells are Coming," and the stirring strains of it thrilled me through and through. Indeed, it was the sweetest music I ever expect to hear—at least, on earth; and the same applied to every one else, I believe, who was left alive in the fortress of Culpeedah. Scrambling up to the rampart, I found all eyes turned, not to the north, whence the last of the Sepoy host was disappearing, but rather down to the foot of the slope, where now, with tired but triumphant tread, the first of Havelock's battle-scarred, war-worn veterans, the gallant Seventy-eighth Highlanders, were swinging into view.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE LAST BATTLE.

It was none too soon that we had been relieved. The heaps of slain, both of friend and foe, lying among the *débris* in the court-yard, showed me that—though these testified that we had made a desperate defense and a creditable fight.

Up on the walls of the fortress, Koambux had been shot dead while receiving instructions from Captain Winslow. Charlie had, in fact, seen one-half of his command killed or disabled, when suddenly the heat, combined with the noise and excitement, overcame him, and he, too, was put out of action.

Fortunately he was crouching behind a fragment of wall at the time, and this had protected him from the bullets of the enemy; but, alas, not from the scorching, relentless rays of the sun. There the poor fellow had lain in a critical condition, till after the fight, when he was found and brought down by some of his men, who survived it; for, although deprived of their leaders, they had continued to throw canisters, and fought on stubbornly, until, at last, the Sepoys drew off through fear of Havelock's approaching heroes, and fled.

Equally obstinate and more desperate had been the defense made at the breach in the rampart. This had been carried at about the same time the gateway had, and in the hand-to-hand struggle thereupon ensuing, the colonel was slightly wounded, the *thannadar* severely, and Majub the Juggler, mortally; while as to the men under them, hardly one-third were left alive, and all of these were more or less injured.

Nor in defending the gateway had my men fared any better, except in the case of Pyu Yet. He, wonderful to relate, had come through the encounter without harm—not even a scratch or bruise; and it was to him chiefly that I owed my life and liberty, though for that matter we all did, the preservation of the garrison having at the last minute devolved on him, and him alone.

When I had fallen among the *débris* behind our breast-work, it had been due to my feet being knocked from under me, which not only placed me at a serious disadvantage to defend myself, but in falling my head had struck on a stone, and I was made unconscious. The enemy, in the meantime, was pressing us hard, and in a moment two savage Mussulmans had stooped over me to bury their gleaming *tulwars* in my body.

I should without doubt have been hacked into pieces, but for the timely assistance of Pyu Yet.

He, faithful fellow, had perceived my danger, notwithstanding the wild tumult that prevailed, and before either of my would-be murderers could turn their weapons against him, he sprang upon them and dispatched them both.

Then, taking my place as commander, he had

rallied such of the *thannadar's* men as were left, and these so encouraged by further prowess that they checked the other assailants, and next forced them back to the gateway—there held them stationary, as it were, until the Sepoys down on the plain had become panic-stricken at the approach of the Highlanders—the sole detachment Havelock had been able to send to our assistance—who now hove in sight, and the enemy melting away, we were indeed saved.

Saved! Ah, what magic in the word! What a load of long accumulated suspense it lifted off the heart! What a grand panorama of future prospects it awoke!

Nana Sahib would no longer persecute us; no longer need Zanee Kooran fear him. Like an avenging angel, General Havelock, with his little army—all told, it numbered not two thousand men—had advanced so surely and steadily, despite every impediment, from Allahabad, that already the Rajah's ill-gotten power was beginning to wane, his flagitious glory to fade. As his sun had risen bathed in the blood of the helpless, and the innocent, it was at last about to set, obscured by the wrath of justice—aye, inevitable fruits of his sowings. Retribution for him was now at hand. Only one more blow, and the equilibrium of the gory height to which he had attained, would be gone from him irretrievably. At Cawnpore, within sight of the suburbs of the old city—that city which had been the theatre for so many great atrocities—the Nana and his fiendish host were at last threatened by Havelock's whole army. The Sixty-fourth and Eighty-fourth Infantry were there, the Ma-

dras Fusileers, Captain Maude, with his gallant battery, and, not to speak of other detachments—some of them being loyal natives, and of whom the Ferozepore Regiment (Sikhs) deserves especial mention—the invincible Seventy-eighth Highlanders. Colonel Richerson and I had accompanied the last-named body hither from Culpeedah.

We were the only ones who had come, however. All the *thannadar's* men that survived the assault like Pyu Yet, he included, had remained at the fortress, to care for the wounded; also, to guard the camp and siege-guns so percipitately abandoned by the enemy.

Long before we arrived on the field before Cawnpore, the skirmishers and artillery had already engaged the Sepoys.

Victorious as Havelock had so far been, the odds were still fearfully against him. Facing him, the enemy had plenty of cannon, occupied a strong position and, what was more to be dreaded, were fighting with ropes round their necks; in other words, they knew no quarter would be given them on account of the crimes they had committed, in case they were defeated. Hence, they could not help but fight.

Of course, all this the general fully realized and understood. Nor did he at the same time ignore the terrible strain he was subjecting his men to, as the following exemplifies, taken from what he said himself, in writing of the affair: "To march troops twenty-four hours in a broiling July sun, and then bid them—supperless and scarcely able to walk—to storm batteries and carry strongly intrenched positions, defended by five times their

own number, seemed like testing their powers to a dangerous extent; and only the most extraordinary circumstances could have justified it."

Which were, that the enemy *must* be defeated, dispersed, in order to insure the safety of his little army; otherwise he feared that it might meet with disaster—so much so, even, that only the day before he had dispatched a swift messenger to Colonel (now Brigadier-General) Neill, at Allahabad, imploring him to send up reinforcements without delay. Also, that those women and children, supposed to be confined in the Subadar Ke Kothce, at Cawnpore, he was anxious, like the rest of us, to release at the earliest possible date.

In point of fact it was owing to these largely that Colonel Richerson and I were present to lend our assistance in achieving their rescue.

Truth to tell, I, for my part, had much rather remained at Culpeedah and partaken with Zanee Kooran the joy of our deliverance; aye, looked forward with her to that period and speculated on what our happiness would be like, when we had got out of this infernal land of Oude—provided such good fortune should ever befall us—and were again in that haven of security and peace—dear old Benares.

Still, on the other hand, I wanted once more to behold those poor unfortunates whose acquaintance I had made while fighting side-by-side with their husbands and fathers, in the intrenchments on the parade-ground at Cawnpore, when we were defending ourselves against such fearful odds, and be assured of their safety. Zanee Kooran—dear girl, had feared all along that the Rajah would ul-

timately vent his spite on them; and now—now the tide of success had turned against him, she was positive.

“I can’t help it, Henry,” she said to me, as we parted, “and I know it isn’t right for me to add gloom to the hardships you have already borne; but somehow I feel that a frightful disappointment—a shocking horror awaits you Englishmen at Cawnpore. I hope—I pray it is not so; I try to make myself believe it is not. But no, my better judgment tells me, alas! it is.”

Hence, I had cause to be anxious about the matter. And so, all the more eagerly I had accompanied the Highlanders to aid Havelock in delivering at the Sepoys a crushing blow.

It had been no easy task for me to tear myself away from Zanee Kooran.

My heart had nearly failed me at the thought; the more so because she had clung to me as if she could never let me go. Indeed, as I hastened away from her in the hospital chamber to join the colonel preparatory to our setting out with the Highlanders, I had not dared look back, lest the temptation to return and remain with her should have been too strong; rather I had impressed on my mind as much as possible her God-speed, her sweet “Heaven bless and keep you, Henry,” and hurried away.

Now, however, that I heard again the booming of the cannon—those deep, inspiring volumes of sound—and the roll of the musketry, mingling with the malignant howls of the enemy, my old hatred for the Nana returned, and superseded every thought of fear.

Havelock himself was riding up and down the lines, scanning with anxious eye the condition of his troops under this terrible ordeal. He found them, alas, reeling in the ranks, with glaring eyeballs, while some were falling to the earth at almost every step, utterly exhausted or insensible. Not a line relaxed on his iron countenance, however, and not once did his resolution seem to falter. Though it was plainly evident that his heart was sorely tried at the sight of his exhausted men, he would not, in his great compassion for those captives of Nana Sahib, see impossibilities; and so heroic was their devotion to him, they, in turn, would quail before no hardships or fatigue. So long as he was able to lead them, they would follow him, if it was in the power of mankind. And thus it was made manifest to me how—

*“True fortitude is seen in great exploits
That justice warrants, and wisdom guides;”*

for when, at length, the bugle's wild blast sounded the onset, they all hailed it with delight.

It so happened that the enemy's guns were too strongly posted to be silenced, though menaced from the rear, it had, indeed, been a cruel period of suspense; but now that the Seventy-eighth was ordered to take the foremost position by assault, the Highlanders moved forward to the work in a steady line. Then, having come within one hundred yards of the intrenchments, the word “Charge!” suddenly rang out, and away they went for it with a wild rush—an irresistible dash.

Not a shot was fired, not a shout uttered, how-

ever, as they threw themselves upon the mutineers; no, the bayonet did its work silently and grimly, and perhaps for that reason all the more thoroughly, since under the fierce inspiration of the need and opportunity, each and every man became a host, and those who had been ready to sink down but a few minutes before, were giants now.

They forced the Sepoys back, and ere long had effected a breach in their line. Whereupon closely followed by the Sixty-fourth men, and these, in turn, by the Sikhs, each of whom vied with the other in the ardor with which they charged the foe, position after position was carried, the enemy fighting stubbornly, but in vain.

As a matter of fact, the opposition they offered served as a stimulus to those desperate soldiers, and the deeds of that engagement are almost beyond belief. Even to myself, a participator, they would have appeared incredible but for the prodigies of valor—the apparently impossible feats which I had already seen performed.

Now onward the whole force swept, like a hurricane, and the heroism of individuals became marvelous, even sublime. Among others, a young son of the general covered himself with glory in leading an important charge.

But, if I do say it, the most desperately gallant man on that field that day—the man whose hand inflicted upon the enemy the most loss and struck greatest terror into them—was Colonel Howard Richerson.

Notwithstanding his wound, a *tulwar* cut in the left arm, he was here, there and everywhere, now

leading, now directing, as the case might be, and always with success.

"Courage, my boys!" he would shout, if at any point he saw an officer fall; "courage, I say, and steady now. Keep the centre straight there. That's right. Never mind that crew over yonder; the Sikhs'll take care of them. Here's the rascals we want to deal with; so at them now. At them, I say! Forward!—charge!"

Then, as away they dashed, panting and wild-eyed, but resolute and unerring, frequently he would add:

"Now, don't mind their appeals for mercy; let compassion restrain not a single hand. Remember the martyrdom of Wheeler, Scott, Banning, and all the rest, including the good old chaplain, Moncrieff. Ah, boys, if you could only have seen him—him and Sir Hugh, as I saw them, when they fell! How did they die? They perished in each other's arms, and oh! never were men more resigned to their fate, never more composed. The others, too, died like soldiers; and all—all, I say, were massacred right in sight and hearing of those poor creatures over there, in the Subada Ke Kothce. Great powers! What a spectacle it was. How their cries for mercy mingled with the shrieks of the dying! But shrillest and loudest of all were the jeers of the butchers—oh! they of whom these very fiends before us are associates, if not the men themselves. At them, then, my brave boys! Oh! smite—smite as you never smote before, for now is your chance. Be sure, too, that you leave no part of your work undone! Don't fear. The God of battles will watch over

and keep you to-day. Yes, He will give us victory. So, at them—at them, I say, and win glory for the Union Jack, and the Queen, and Old England, that will endure forever and ever!”

Accordingly, before the on-coming tide of incited humanity the Sepoys would draw back, as if deprived of the power to fight, or even flee. For, in truth, some would throw down their arms and huddle together like cattle in a storm—aye, as if palsied by the sight of those dreaded bayonets—that advancing wave of merciless steel; while others would drop on their knees, perhaps, and bellow for mercy, and others cover their faces with their hands, so that they might not see the approach of death, or else throw themselves upon the ground, face downwards, a few—only a very few resisting with the desperation of despair to the last.

Slower now the wave would move, but anon faster, and then, where it had been stayed longest, the dead would lie on top of the dead, the flesh still quivering, the limbs hardly through convulsing.

In this manner the slaughter went on; for few prisoners were taken and none of the wounded were spared. Through it all, Colonel Richerson was one of the central figures. Men followed where he led, gazing at him in wonder, while the Sepoys, on the other hand, either sank down or fled from before him, terrified.

On one occasion I beheld a twenty-four pounder gun which, in the hands of a score of them, had gained an enfilading position against the Sixty-fourth men, and in another moment would have

opened a storm of grape and canister that must have been fatal. Richerson, however, mounted on a horse which he had caught from a Mussulman chief, saw the danger, and, single-handed, dashed thither to prevent it; and, owing now to his ferocious appearance, his shouting, and the fall of two men who had come first in his way, he carried such terror to the rest that they turned and fled from the gun at the top of their speed. Wherefore, I shortly afterwards assumed charge of that piece of ordnance myself, and, assisted by six men of Captain Maude's battery, turned it to good effect upon its recent owners.

Thus the battle hotly raged until the going down of the sun; when, suddenly, wild huzzas rang out, announcing that the last intrenchment was taken, the enemy everywhere beaten, the victory won! The heroic Highlanders, at the front, started the glad acclaim, and soon it was ringing through the whole line.

But, although the Sepoys were so completely routed and at last in full retreat, we still rushed on in mad pursuit of them and, with the relentlessness of the avengers that we were, continued the slaughter. We kept it up, in fact, till the shades of evening made further advance impracticable, when, as we halted, the last of the fleeing Hindus could be seen in the distance, flitting away into the absorbing gloom like fading spectres in the ghostly panorama of night.

Then, in sight of the old barracks of Cawnpore, Havelock's men, utterly worn out, having made that day a march of twenty-two miles and won a doubtful battle after five hours of hard

fighting beneath a sun of tremendous power, all sank down, supperless, upon the earth.

Colonel Richerson and I likewise sought our couch there side by side on the sand, more exhausted, if possible, than any of the rest. But, for all this, and the fact that we were both used to soldiering, we could not sleep. Why? Because horrible doubts and fears assailed us, so that many a time during that long, tedious night we were glad to sit up and, by the faint, friendly glow of the twinkling stars, gaze in the direction of that city where, in company with Sir Hugh and his men, we had experienced such privations, difficulties, anguish, horror. Ah, the only bright hope awaiting us there now—the sole reward we expected to receive on the morrow—was the pleasure of seeing our countrywomen released from the hands of their treacherous jailers.

Alas! If we could only have known. And yet, perhaps it was just as well we did not. Why? Because in that case I verily believe every one of us in that reclining army would have risen and, despite wounds, hunger, thirst—aye, despite the thousand and one pains resulting from the terrible ordeal through which we had already passed, and were still passing, staggered on in the dark, searching for the Sepoys until we had either expired from exhaustion or gone stark mad.

CHAPTER XX.

MOURNING AND MYSTIFICATION.

WITH the break of day, Havelock and his heroes were up betimes. New life, fresh hope, bright prospects awaiting them, I saw in nearly every eye the joy, the triumph, the intoxication attendant upon the owner's vision of now performing the sequel to yesterday's terrible task.

We did not expect that the Sepoys would offer us any further opposition. Indeed, how could they when their camp, supplies, guns, ammunition, much of their accoutrements and small arms even, were gone from them? Ah, the probability was they were as much disheartened by their losses as we elated over our success.

Nevertheless, the sun was not yet smiling upon us from out of the Eastern Universe, when we were all startled by the distant boom of a cannon; the echoes of which having died away, an explosion ensued that shook the very ground where we stood; and hardly had we recovered from this shock, when our attention was attracted by a dense column of smoke, rolling upward beyond the city walls.

Our spirits accordingly sank not a little, for we now knew that the great magazine there had been blown up. By whom? Ah, whom else than the Nana? In his helplessness, his despair—aye, in his realizing, as he could not help but do, how, from our having defeated eleven thousand of his countrymen, and that with every advantage in their favor, his own life must be in danger, he was probably retreating.

The peril which had so long hovered over those two hundred women and children whom we hoped to release, was manifest. I saw that every one, for the most part, suddenly fell prey to horrible doubts and fears. Faces serene, confident but a moment before, were pale and stern now. A nervous fervor possessed us all, even Havelock himself.

We were as impatient to be off as participants in a fox-hunt; and when the notes of the bugle called upon us to fall in, as it very soon did, the joy with which it was received and obeyed was intense.

We in due time entered by the Subada Ke Kothee gate. Here Havelock and his staff, together with other officers, including Richerson and myself, who were riding at the head of the column, halted near the prison, surprised, let alone awed, that neither welcome nor resistance should be met with.

For, as a matter of fact, not a Sepoy—not even a single native bearing arms, had we thus far seen. No, only a wretched pariah, in filthy rags, was caught sight of as we swung into the courtyard; and he had at once slunk away. Evidently he had been there seeking plunder.

With an increasing presentiment—with a foreboding that began almost to nauseate us, we stood there a minute longer, listening eagerly for some sound at least of innocent, prattling children; peering everywhere with sharp, suspicious eyes to discover, if possible, if any trap or treachery had been prepared for us.

It was unavailing, however. Not another person appeared, and no sounds further than those made by our own breathing, arose. All in all, the place was enveloped in a silence as oppressive as that of the tomb.

Filled now with a painful dread indeed, we again pressed forward, and alas, that I have to record it, came upon a scene which confirmed the worst fears of the most pessimistic among us.

Strewn around on the pavement, in blood apparently two days old, were fragments of dresses and underclothing, and other articles of attire worn only by European women and children; and, lastly, but not least, long locks of gory hair—oh! shocking mementos now to behold, and, like the rest, silent but eloquent, convincing testimonials of the wholesale butchery which had taken place in the prison. On rushing across this awful space, dumb and terror-stricken, and entering the dark rooms beyond, we found, when our eyes had become accustomed to the gloom, that which made us gaze about us like men in a ghastly dream.

Here, not only was the floor covered with blood an inch deep, but in it, more or less submerged, was every conceivable kind of wearing apparel of women and children; also, a hundred worn and tattered ornaments that had come through the

long ordeal of suffering, to be thus put off at last! Not only was the blood on the floor, but the walls were thickly sprinkled with it, while, equally dreadful to behold, bullet-marks were everywhere visible. The wooden columns and pilasters of the place were covered with deep sword cuts, hanging still from which were locks and tresses of hair, left there, without a doubt, by the relentless blades when they had so cruelly cloven the flowing crowns. None of those cuts were high up, as if aimed at persons who were fighting for their lives, but instead low down, showing that the murderous blows had all been dealt upon crouching women and children. In proofs whereof, we even picked up babies' shoes with the tiny feet sticking in them!

But further than this not the semblance of a mutilated form was to be seen there; the marvel of which made us turn and look at one another, surprised, bewildered, dazed. Where, then, were the remains of this diabolical hate?

Ah, as if in answer to our silent query, shouts now arose outside in the yard—shouts of amazement and horror. Accordingly, hastening thither, we found a crowd congregated about the great well. Human limbs had been seen to protrude from it, which, having been removed, showed it to be filled to the brim with the forms of Nana Sahib's victims. Yes, all of them, after being massacred, had been cast, the young and old—wife, mother, daughter, sister, whichever the case might have been—into this horrible pit!

It was a revolting task—the clearing of that well of its ghastly burden, and one heart-rending

in the extreme. So much so, even, that many of the soldiers, who had struggled so heroically against the heat and a host of foes in getting here, broke down and wept like children.

"God helping me, I will have the Nana's life for this," said Sir Henry Havelock, taking each of us at this juncture solemnly by the hand; "and never from now on shall quarter be given to any of the Sepoys found in arms!"

Hearing the oath of their leader, his soldiers swore likewise.

But why dwell longer on the spectacle of horror, sorrow, sadness?

Suffice it to say that after reason had been infused into the minds of the half-demented soldiers, and a little care taken of those ghastly forms, Havelock led his troops into camp, to rest, and later restore order again in the town.

The next three days were spent by them in hunting down the Sepoys hiding in Cawnpore, who were, for the most part, hung at once, with the exception of the leaders.

These, having been instrumental in inciting their inferiors to revolt, were first tried by court-martial; and being almost invariably found guilty, promptly sentenced to death. But not one of them was hung. No, they were rather subjected to a form of punishment which, from its very frightfulness and celerity, rendered us quite as safe among that treacherous, uncertain, barbarous element as if we had been in a European settlement.

It is not the horror of the mere mode of death itself that strikes such dread and terror into the

minds of the Hindus, as the manner in which their peculiar religious education leads them to regard the utter destruction and hopeless scattering of the fragments of the body. This, they believe, will deprive them of their souls and make of them malignant ghosts after death.

Havelock took advantage of it, and had those leaders of the Sepoys, who were found most guilty, executed in accordance. They were first lashed, each man with his back to the muzzle of a loaded cannon, and then shot from the same. Wherever this mode of punishment was from that time employed, it resulted in few, if any, germs of discontent being left to develop and cause more trouble after the Great Rebellion had been crushed.

I am sorry to say, however, that no such fate, to my knowledge, nor that of any one else, as I know of, ever befell Nana Sahib.

Havelock's little army had been so weakened by loss in fighting, sunstrokes and disease, it was impossible for us to pursue the Rajah then with any hope of catching him. We must wait until General Neill came up from Allahabad with reinforcements, and these did not arrive till on the third day after we had gone into camp.

Once they were at hand, however, no time was lost in fitting out an expedition against the Nana. On the 20th of July the whole army proceeded to march upon Bithoor, where he was known to be strongly fortified in his own castle, with an army of five thousand men and many cannon.

It was expected, therefore, that he would make a desperate defense. But, on the contrary, when he saw us approaching, and thought, as he must,

how great was the hate that each of us bore for him, his courage, as well as that of his soldiers, gave way, and they fled without firing a shot. They even left their guns, elephants and baggage, so that all these fell into Havelock's hands, together with many men and a large number of horses. Hence, the only harm he inflicted on the "Tiger," after all, was in depriving him of his resources and destroying his home at Bithoor, his magazine, palace, town—in fact, everything there belonging or pertaining to him.

As it turned out, no worse punishment, perhaps, could have been devised, for this left him without a home, least of all, any place of refuge; and as if in proportion to the magnitude of his crimes, he finally became a wanderer—aye, a fugitive, hunted like a wild beast, and ending where, when, or how, no one is able to tell.

When the camp was at length established, we were summoned to General Havelock's tent, where he received us with marked cordiality. In truth, we were made the heroes of the hour. Refreshments were served, and we were complimented—Richerson for his conspicuous bravery and valuable service in the battle of the day before, and I for the few fortunate achievements I had made with the twenty-four pounder he had turned over to me after capturing it single-handed from the Sepoys.

Then, at the general's request, the colonel related in full the unprecedented defense made by Sir Hugh Wheeler, and the fate befalling him and his men upon their subsequent surrender to Nana Sahib. He also described our own adventures—how opportunely we had been rescued by Zanee

Kooran, the way she had endeavored to trap the Rajah in the fortress of Culpeedah, why it was he had slipped away from her when she thought she had him secure, and what terrible difficulties we had consequently experienced in defending the citadel—especially just prior to the Highlanders' coming and raising the siege for us.

"How you must have suffered," Havelock exclaimed, when he had finished. "I little dreamed you were reduced to such straits; and if it had not been for the couriers you sent me, and the audible booming of those guns bombarding you so incessantly, I should never have thought of turning toward Culpeedah to help any one. Ah, all of you would have perished. For the Sepoys, let me tell you, tried in every possible way to draw our attention from that place, and lead us in an entirely opposite direction; they did so particularly yesterday morning, when I sent out the Highlanders to relieve you. Indeed, they became so bold and threatening then, I dared not part with any more than that regiment; it looked as if there would be a heavy engagement at once. But there was not till in the afternoon. But, gentlemen, you have had a marvelous escape; or, more properly speaking, a series of them."

"Well, it does seem incredible, now it is over, that we are alive," the colonel remarked, as he mopped his brow.

"'Twas the work of Providence," said I reverently, but thinking chiefly of Zanee Kooran.

"No doubt of it," the general continued, earnestly; "and for that reason, allow me to say, Cap-

tain Clermonte, it pleases me all the more to tell you that I think your troubles are about over."

"Why, sir, what do you mean?" I asked in surprise, even alarm, as he paused, for there was an unmistakable significance in his tone. "Isn't there going to be plenty of fighting for us yet?"

"Yes, for *me* I suppose there is. That's what I am reckoning on, at any rate," he said, in his bluff, frank way which, I found, he used only toward his favorite officers. "As you are probably aware, gentlemen, your old companion-at-arms, General Neill, I hope, will be with us in a few days, with reinforcements. When he does arrive, I expect to leave him here in command of a small force and with the rest push on myself as fast as possible toward Lucknow, where the beleaguered garrison is in a frightful situation. I must try to get there at all odds, and for that reason shall want every true, able-bodied man who can accompany me, especially those officers whom I *know* I may depend and lean upon for sure support.

"But you, Captain Clermonte, greatly though I regret it, cannot go with me; neither can you remain here. And the same applies to you, Colonel Richerson, and also to your friend, Captain Winslow."

The colonel bowed to the speaker, who thus continued:

"This does not proceed from myself, remember. No, had I the power to abide by my own wishes, you should both be sanctioned by me to do as you pleased. And yet, I hardly think, if I were you, I would have the decision altered,

provided I could; certainly not in your case, Mr. Clermonte."

I listened, more and more surprised, and with a strange mixture of dread and fear. As the colonel sat very still, however, and his face betrayed no sign of emotion, I ventured as yet not a word of inquiry.

Meanwhile, Havelock drew a packet of papers from his breast-pocket, and, selecting two, returned the others.

"These, gentlemen," said he, "are orders from the Governor-general. They were issued before His Lordship knew of the sad events which have taken place here; but that doesn't interfere with my doing with them as he intended Sir Hugh Wheeler should have done. The fact is, I am expected, now that he is dead, to act in the place of Sir Hugh. Therefore, I will give one of these orders to each of you; they will explain the rest."

Before either of us had a chance to examine them, an orderly rushed in with the announcement that our friends had arrived from Culpeedah, and very much desired the honor of our presence at once; the more so as they had in their company a stranger who earnestly wished to see us, and myself in particular.

"Go, gentlemen!" said Havelock authoritatively, but with an expression that was a perfect enigma; "you'll be well received by this new-comer."

Truly, we were dumbfounded; the very atmosphere around us seemed to be oppressive with mystery.

CHAPTER XXI.

REVELATIONS AND REJOICING.

THE orderly conducted Richerson and me to a bungalow some distance away, which stood alone, the European residences on both sides of it having been burned.

"Your friends, sirs, have chosen this to dwell in, it affording the ladies better accommodations than a tent could," the orderly explained, when we had reached our destination.

"Gad! You are alive, then?" a cheery, well-known voice called out to us from the veranda.

"Great powers! That's Charlie," cried the colonel, bounding forward like a boy, and manifesting that, after all—

*"There are no friends like old friends,
And none so good and true."*

Nor was I very much behind him; indeed, we were both wringing the captain's hand at about the same time.

"But where is the new-comer—the stranger who desires so much to see us?" we demanded of him

in unison, when he had at length succeeded in assuring us that he was recovering satisfactorily from his misfortune of yesterday on the walls of Culpeedah; for besides him and ourselves, there was not a person in sight.

"I will take you to him now," he said, escorting us into the house.

"We haven't had time to make the place very cozy, you see," he continued, as he led us up a barren hall, "the natives having carried away everything of value here; but I think there will soon be a certain degree of comfort restored to some of the rooms. Verona and Lillian, with Zanee Kooran's servants, are doing all they can toward that purpose. One apartment they have already treated—this is it," he said, stopping before a closed door.

"Henry, suppose the colonel and I stroll around a bit, and let you enter first. Oh, don't be alarmed; the princess is there to introduce you to him," he added, with a peculiar smile.

Thus it was that I, awed and mystified, found myself pushed into the room, as it were, where I came face to face with Zanee Kooran, who, having heard my approach, had hastened to meet me.

She cast herself into my arms, and the pleasure of again pressing her to my bosom was unspeakable; for to know—to feel that I was still alive—ah, alive and unharmed—and united to her who had become a part of myself, banished the thought of everything else. Indeed, all my past suffering disappeared, as mist in the sunshine; my heart was intoxicated with love and bliss, my soul went out

from me in thankfulness, and I felt like shouting aloud in my joy, yet could not, it was so great.

"Zanee! My life! My love! Zanee! My own! My princess! What an angel of mercy you have been!" I finally managed to murmur, as I covered her face with kisses, and then lifted my head to look upon her heavenly features.

"Henry!" she whispered; "O! My captain! My hero! What happiness this is! How merciful the Lord has been, after all, to bring you back to me, as He has, safe and well. And—O! Henry! Henry!"

"Well, what is it, darling?" I whispered, softly, still floating, as it were, in elysian realms.

"Ah—ah!" she breathed; and then, as soon as she could control her feelings sufficiently—for had not my coming been to her like a soldier's back to his sweetheart in the fullest sense from the battlefield?—she turned, a happy smile breaking through her happier tears, and said:

"O! O, my captain! Here—here is a noble, generous friend of ours; but—it is to you chiefly he is nearest and dearest. Go to him, Henry; go to him, dear boy! and—may God's blessings attend you both evermore!"

Ah! Can words convey the sensation—half fear, half joy—that thrilled me, and thrilled me yet again, as I now looked upon the tall, handsome old man who stood before me, erect and stately as a prince? For such, in truth, he was, though his once nut-brown hair was at last almost white and hung low upon his shoulders in carefully kept, fanciful ringlets.

As I beheld that dear, worn face, upon which

a great anxiety was now manifest, and those stern lips parted, as if words were back of them that the owner dared not utter, the eyes even filled with tears, ready to drop at the touch of the next emotion to come upon him, a blur—a film came before me, screening from my senses every cruel recollection of the past, and, rushing blindly forward, with outstretched arms, I exclaimed:

“Father! father! O, my father! Heaven be praised for this blessed, blessed hour, and say that you forgive me!”

“Forgive? O, my son! it is not for me to forgive, but to be forgiven. Stop! Tell me that *you* forgive! Tell me!—for O, I cannot receive you to my bosom unless I have learned from your own lips that you do pardon and forgive!”

“O, my dear, dear father, hear me speak the word, then: From my heart—from my heart of hearts I forgive.”

“O! my son! my Henry! O——”

At this point, as he pressed me to him, his voice broke into one great sob; and while our tears were intermingled, Zanee Kooran had turned away, weeping softly, and though her ayahs, as well as Pyu Yet, who were present, had been reared under the doctrines not to believe in emotions, they, nevertheless, found it necessary to wipe their eyes again and again, in order to see clearly what was going on around them.

Then, when we could compose ourselves somewhat, I took father by the hand and led him to the divan on which my love now sat, her lovely face in a blissful glow.

“Dear father,” said I (my voice trembled in

spite of myself, I heard); "dear father, I am induced to think you have already become acquainted with the goodness, the blessings bestowed on our people by this fair lady. But I want to add, just the same, that she is the same noble princess about whom I wrote you, and, as it has since turned out, the preserver of my friends and me."

"My boy," said he, half playfully, yet with deep emotion, "I have indeed learned to know her, and of her, and to esteem her. If I should say that I loved her, I would but poorly express the full burden of the affection she has won from me."

How my heart leaped with joy to hear such words issue from those proud lips. What strength—what peace and composure they brought me. I felt as if I could bid defiance to Nana Sahib, to the Sepoys, to all the infernal deities of India, if necessary.

Meanwhile, Zanee Kooran quickly arose and gave him her hand in that charming way peculiar to herself, saying:

"Sir, no more for the present, if you will but let me call you father."

"Why, bless you, my precious child, nothing would please me better, for such I hope to be soon in very truth; and yours may it be to share with him"—nodding to me, as he spoke—"the honor of the title that must ere long be his."

Thus speaking, he took her to his bosom; and she, in the fullness of her true heart, pillowed her head there, twining both her arms at the same time around his neck. While I stood by with heart overflowing with joy, she murmured to him words

of comfort and love; and he thanked and blessed her for them.

I had known, of course, that my father was in India; his letter, which Zanee Kooran had brought me, led me to expect that; but I little thought of meeting him so soon, provided I should at all, and certainly not in the very midst of the enemy.

To what was it due, then?

Why, the fact that he had been sent out by the Government—as he had written me he was going to be—bearing the Queen’s commission, and with important dispatches, which any reliable messenger might have borne. Only he had been, at his own request, further and specially empowered to examine into the causes which had led to the present rebellion; as the seizure and confiscation of the rich estates of the Oude—measures much opposed at the time, but overruled, nevertheless, by the determined and stubborn Dalhousie:—and, if possible, to devise means whereby they could be met and overcome.

“But, Henry,” he concluded, with a happy smile, “the best part of all is, you, and your two friends, are relieved here from further duty, and may set out with me down the river just as soon as we can make arrangements.”

“Why, father, will you have fulfilled your mission so soon?” I asked, in surprise mingled with inexpressible joy.

“Yes, my son,” he answered, “for it would be useless for me to proceed further; I shall by that time have become acquainted with all the facts Canning can make use of at present. Moreover, he requested me to turn back as soon as I had

found you and your friends; in fact, gave me special orders which release you here, that I may get back the sooner by having you for my escort."

"And who has the delivery of those orders?" I asked eagerly.

"Why, the general, to be sure."

"Ha! Then I have received mine already," I cried, "but have had no opportunity to examine it till now." And I produced forthwith the paper which had so added to my perplexity.

Just as father said, it *was* a "Special Order," issued from the headquarters of His Lordship, the Governor-general, bearing date, June 27th—ah! the very day on which Cawnpore fell,—and written in the round letter-press caligraphy of the accomplished correspondent, but signed by the nervous, ornate, energetic hand of the chieftain himself. It simply ordered me, my part of the mission in regard to Nana Sahib's suppression having failed, to report at once for duty to Colonel Howard Richerson in acting as an escort for Her Majesty's messenger, Sir Edgerton Clermonte, K.G.C.B., *via* Allahabad to Benares, where, the order informed me, I would be duly notified of His Lordship's further pleasure.

"Yes, you are likely to be called to the front again," father hastened to enlighten me as soon as I finished my perusal of the order; "for the revolt cannot be suppressed in a moment. But at present you and your two friends are granted what we may call a furlough, His Lordship taking it for a surety that it would be much appreciated by you after undergoing the horrors of a siege, though he little dreamed it would be so

terrible—that you would have to go through two sieges and fight desperately, night and day, to save yourselves from the enemy.

“Still, there is no easy time before you now,” he continued. “Under the best of circumstances, we cannot start until General Neill has arrived with reinforcements; then the Nana has yet to be conquered, and once we are on the way we shall have to look sharp that we are not ambushed and cut to pieces by some one of the many bands of robbers who will be prowling about. However, the princess informs me we shall have a strong retinue—for she, of course, will accompany us. Therefore, if we do reach Benares in safety, you, Henry, because of the information and advice I shall have in store for Canning, will serve His Lordship better in being a part of my escort, than you or your friends could in any other way.”

“And most heartily will it be tendered,” said I, glancing fondly at Zanee Kooran.

“Ah, the Governor-general is a grand and noble man,” she exclaimed, a warm, effulgent glow suffusing her beautiful face; “the people wouldn’t have been robbed and all this trouble brought upon our land, had he arrived earlier, I am sure.”

“No, perhaps not,” said father. “Like the rest of us, he greatly laments the mutiny, is much interested in the welfare of every one and, above all, princess, in yours.”

“In *mine*?” she cried, in unfeigned surprise.

“Yes, dear lady, in yours,” father answered, smiling. “He considers it a beautiful attribute of character—your venturing up here, to rescue your friends, and was not a little concerned lest

you came to harm through it. It will afford him much relief and satisfaction, therefore, when he hears of your safety; and your heroic effort to capture Nana Sahib, he, like many another, will never forget.

"And now, my dear child, allow me to say that when I reached Benares, I found your parents, and your mother especially, has left a name which is the personification of what is pure, true and loyal—had lived, in short, a life of honor and virtue. Accordingly the mystery—for mystery, I will now own, it had been to me—was cleared up regarding your remembrance of those in trouble—that is, your kindness and noble devotion to your friends. Yes, I knew then whence came the spirit which has given birth to such golden deeds."

The glow deepened on Zanee Kooran's cheeks, and tears of gratitude filled her eyes, as she said:

"Ah, sir, my mother—Heaven bless her!—was a good woman; and she made of my father a good man. I—I remember her well, and, while she lived, she taught me always what was upright and just—how to be a Christian. They tell me I have inherited her outward form and appearance; but alas, sir, I fear—I know, in fact, the beauty of her inner self is lacking in me. Strive as much as I may to be unselfish, generous and good, I find myself daily—aye! hourly called upon to ask His pardon for endless faults and sins."

"My darling, who isn't?" I asked, my own tears mingling now with hers. "To err is human, remember; to forgive, divine."

"Ah, true—true, indeed," said father. And, though he said nothing more, I understood well

of what he was thinking. But now the recollections of the bitter quarrel between us marred not our happiness. And as if to compensate for all our suffering in the past, we seemed to be attended, as it were, by a choir of angels, whose singing raised us up to Heaven; yes,—

*“To the Eden of the blest,
Where the heart is always happy,
In a calm, unbroken rest. . . .
And the flowers never die,
But are blooming by the river,
As it softly murmurs by.
Where the lilies give their incense,
As the fragrant breezes blow,
And lift their balm to seraphs
In their perfumed cups of snow. .
Where all chant celestial psalms,
And no storms or tempests ever
Come to mar eternal calms.”*

* * * * *

There is but little more to tell.

Colonel Richerson was, like the rest of us, greatly pleased with the unexpected and agreeable turn of affairs. Indeed, he told me he aspired to no higher honor than that of commanding an escort for father, whose good will and friendship he won at the outset by describing, and even dilating upon my exploits—things I had never performed—that is, not as he had.

Following the arrival of General Neill from Allahabad, with reinforcements, and the driving

of Nana Sahib out of Bithoor, the requisite arrangements were at last made whereby Colonel and Mrs. Richerson, Captain and Mrs. Winslow, father, Zanec Kooran and myself, with a strong escort, set out upon our journey down the river, leaving Neill to assume command at Cawnpore, while Havelock pushed on, with his gallant force, to the relief of Lucknow.

Owing to our retinue, which was composed of Pyu Yet, several of the princess's Khattriyas—men who had fully recovered from the injuries they sustained during the last assault by the Sepoys on the fortress of Culpeedah, together with two score of the *thannadar's* men, himself included, who had been equally fortunate, and about fifty Madras Fusileers, we reached our destination, Benares, at length, without any serious mishap.

Here the colonel, Charlie and myself were left to recuperate, while father hastened on to confer with the Governor-general and hand over to him his reports.

Then, Charlie and the colonel having become convalescent of their wounds, we three were sent up the river again—this time with an adequate force under us to restore law and order in certain districts between Allahabad and Mirzapoor.

Several weeks were consumed by us in this manner; and during the time we ran down, ferreted out and brought to trial a large number of rebels, many of whom, as they had already been pardoned once for breaking their oath of allegiance to the Crown, we had shot as soon as identified, with the exception of a few who were able to prove an alibi,

and the rest summarily punished. We also brought relief to many starving and homeless people by the judicious distribution of funds, which father and Zanee Kooran had jointly placed at our disposal for this purpose.

At length, however, we were recalled to Benares; and there we were surprised and elated almost beyond measure by learning that we had been granted leave to return home, and that with the highest honors.

Yes, thanks to father's influence and Havelock's favorable mention of us in his official report, Canning's generosity was such that he had arranged matters whereby we were to be retired at our own option—the colonel as a brigadier-general, and Charlie and I each as a colonel; furthermore, to be decorated with the Victoria Cross, beside receiving various medals for fidelity.

Indeed, on our arrival at Calcutta, we were given a grand reception in state by His Lordship, previous to which he paraded us through the principal streets of the European part of the town himself, which were in consequence thronged with people, who everywhere greeted us enthusiastically as “the three invincibles.”

Truly, our triumph was complete; and therefore, as father had now finished his work of inspection, he formed with us a happy company when, a few days later, we all embarked on a staunch ship which was about to set sail with us for the shores of dear Old England. Oh, doubly so to me, for Zanee Kooran was at last my bride, and Pyu Yet, his wife and little Krishuna were

with us, as likewise was the good *thannadar* of Culpeedah.

"Ah!" murmured Zanee Kooran, gazing fondly at her dusky servants, when the ship had cast loose from her moorings, with prow turned seaward preparatory to buffeting the waves of the Indian Ocean; "ah, Henry, it would have been indeed a pity to have left such true friends behind."

"My darling!" said I, drawing her to me with a greater love for her than I had ever felt before; "Pyu Yet once told me—it was in Captain Winslow's drawing-room, if you remember—that nothing would please him so as to serve me with his life. It seems that, in a way, his wish is being granted."

THE END.

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